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CD-ROM



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Issue three Control Control







76 Ass Stuck on Tomb Raider III? It's time to get your life back. So ditch the bitch with our 17-page player's guide.



weekend?

Painful moments
Prepare to Wince, flinch
Prepare to wince, repaining and possibly cry.

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the songs
Videogame musician Tommy
Tallarico tinkles his ivories.

REAL RACING ROOTS '99

PlayStation racing

breaks the speed

barrier. You'll love

playing this game.

Arcade The videogame magazine

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AReview

The Ultimate Game Buyer's Guide

104 New PlayStation Games

New releases: Kensai Sacred Fist, Max Power Racing, Akuji the Heartless, Devil Dice, Sensible Soccer '99, Tiger Woods 99, Monkey Hero, Pool Hustler, Hugo, Dodgem Arena, Shanghai: True Valor.

"Platinum" budget games: Hercules, Soul Blade.

Import games: R4: Ridge Racer Type 4.

116 New PC Games

New releases: Heretic 2, Star Wars: Rogue Squadron, Settlers III, Blood 2, Apache Havoc, War of the Worlds, Fallout 2, Future Cop: LAPD, Ashgan, Scotland Yard, WWII Fighters, Deo Gratias, Fighter Squadron, Grand Touring, X-Pro Boarders, Mankind.

Budget games: Broken Sword, Cannon Fodder, Jedi Knight, Power Racing Pack, Redline Racer, Shadows of the Empire, Stars, Toon Struck, Virtual Karts, Warcraft, WipEout 2097, Worms.

126 New N64 Games

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Four men who should know better, a crate of beer and a handful of the most violent games on the planet. It's a recipe for disaster. Of course, we know that now.

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Moments

EDITORIAL

the new...



With Neil West. Editor

ello. Thanks for picking up this issue of Arcade. That's my ugly mug in the photo above, but I don't know what you look like. I really don't know much about you at all. Right now you might be on a train, at home, in the office, or even standing in a newsagents. You might be pegging it down the street having just nicked this copy from a newsstand. But let's hope not. You might be at a friend's house, having just spotted Arcade on the coffee table, and sneaking a quick leaf-through. You might be a regular Arcade subscriber. You might be reading a videogame magazine for the very first time. You might be a man, you might be a woman. You might have a big pile of homework to finish off. You might have just put the kids to bed.

I haven't got a clue.

But the one thing I do know is that you enjoy videogames. Whether you play only once a week with your mates after the pub or you sneak a game of Quake in the office most lunchtimes, you've got an interest in gaming.

And Arcade's here to help you out. Whether it's by letting you know which PlayStation footy game is best (ISS Pro '98 from Konami, by the way) or how to cheat while playing Trespasser on the PC(press [ctrl] + [shift] + Q + W, release W then you can skip to any level you want) we want to help you get the most out of videogames. And in return, hopefully you'll want to become a regular Arcade reader.

That's it. Sales pitch over. Thanks for sticking with it. Before you get on enjoying the rest of the issue, just let me say goodbye to outgoing editor and art editor Matt Bielby and Matt Williams. Thanks for all your efforts, chaps, and if you ever need to know which Nintendo 64 car racing game offers the best tyre-squealing thrills, you know where to find us. (Oh, what the hell, it's Nintendo's own F1 World Grand Prix and it'll cost you just £40).

1 Jull Jest Neil West Editor

Lara Croft model Nell McAndrew more attractive with her clothes on? New videogames too expensive? Dreamcast a load of old pants? Your letters say it all...

t's great to know that Arcade readers have so much to say for themselves. We've been deluged with letters from young and old, male and female, recent owners of spanking new PlayStation s and ten-year videogame veterans. By far and away the most popular topic of correspondence this month has been Arcade 2's

pictorial of Lara Croft model Nell McAndrew. Most of you loved it as we hoped you would. Some, however, felt the pages could have been better given to more "serious" coverage of games. Maybe this shows you can't please all of the people all the time, but we're going to keep trying.



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Conspiracy theories

I was interested in the conspiracy theories surrounding Acclaim's relationship with Nintendo, as mentioned in the Turok 2 review (Arcade 1, page 140).

Here's another one. Why is it that whenever I go into Dixons and look at the consoles, the N64s are always turned off? The same thing happens on the computer front with the PC and Mac. If there is a

DISONS

■ Dixons – is there something sinister going on?

Mac on display, it will be either turned off, or showing the Desktop. The PC on the other hand will have some flight sim or similarly good-looking application in

It was the same when the Saturn first appeared. If you went into a branch of Dixons back then, the PlayStation would be on, but the Saturn would be turned off. Even further back, the same thing happened with the Amiga and ST. The Amiga would be showing an animation while the ST was showing the Desktop. What's going on?

Noel Wallace, via e-mail

What is going on? We rang up Dixons head office, asked to speak to someone "in charge" and were put through to a nice lady who asked us what we wanted. We explained Noel's letter, the lady made a very Marge Simpson-esque "Hmmmm" noise, and told us she would ask around and get back to us.

Later on in the day the phone rang and a different nice lady from Dixons asked, "Is this a joke?" and we explained that it wasn't. Oh no. Indeed, far from it (and so on). Then she went "Hmmmm" - a lot like the first lady - and told us that Noel's observations must be coincidence. To back this up, she explained that she'd personally visited a Dixons shop that very morning and had guite clearly seen a Nintendo 64 on display running "that Bandicoot game."

So that clears that one up then. Kind of.



■ Do the write thing. Let us know what's on your mind and share you gaming wisdom with the rest of the world. Send your letters to:

Rants & Raves Arcade. Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA12BW

E-mail us at: arcade.mag@ futurenet.co.uk

The best letter each month will win an exclusive Arcade Tshirt, as modelled here by the Lovely Lisa™. What have you been up to this month Lisa? "I've been eating apples." And there you have it.



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Worms Armageddon: Humorous; Annoying; Innovative; Emotional; and most of all it's pure Gameplay.



CD-ROM

Kants Rave

On the side

- Congratulations. As an older gamer it's a real pleasure to read such a well put together mag especially one that features writing from some of the best journos in the business. I was worried that Jaz Rignall had retired or died Gordon Bethwaite, via e-mail
- So, Neil West, still alive! I was a big fan of Next Generation magazine when I was in the States, but I thought you'd disappeared off of the face of the planet. Simon Lamb, via e-mail
- Just got the second issue of your magazine, and it's coming along very well. The "99 for '99" feature was great, trés informative. And it was great to hear that good ol' Sir Clive was still alive. Alexis Nelson, **Birmingham**

That's quite enough small letters about being glad people haven't died. Somehow it's all a bit morbid.

- Congratulations on a superb issue. I particularly liked the "Games Night" feature. I bought two issues so I could read one and save the other for future generations to refer to when pondering what really good literature is. Shaun Myatt, via e-mail
- I love the clever idea of the "Games Night". Me and a few friends have begun to do a similar thing except we skip out the reviews. It usually ends up in a fight, though. Olly B, via e-mail

Thanks Olly. But having a few mates round to play games? It's hardly an original idea, surely?

Woman problem

In your story on the Tokyo Games Show (Arcade 1, page 15) you complain about women not being "politically correct" for being at the Tokyo Games Show. What is the problem? Normally you guys complain that there are not enough women participating in videogaming. You can't have it both ways - it's about time you said "yes" to women.

Thomas Holzer Theale

Eh? No, we said that it was politically incorrect that the only women gracing the Tokyo Games Show were scantily clad "companions" designed to lure male showgoers to stands. We already say "yes" to women! Which leads us to...

dodgy "babes" to liven up boring pages. But Nell isn't just another "babe" - right now she's playing a very high-profile role in the UK games scene. People are interested in her, so we gave her some space. It just so happens that she's a model, so we showed pictures of her modelling...

Okay, so it's nice to print good pictures of an attractive woman every now and again. But we don't do it because we think Arcade needs them. And the fact remains that, while Arcade is for all gamers, the majority of our readership – just by virtue of the videogame market and the magbuying public at large – will, like Matt, be twentysomething, hetersosexual men. Which leads us to ...

Quivering antenna

Arcade seemed very impressive at first. But

as I read more I quickly became very disillusioned. The first bit to get my "uhoh" antenna quivering was where you said your style would be similar to gents' lifestyle magazines. My heart sank as I anticipated lots of sad, insecure, heterosexist, laddish bullshit.

My worst fears were confirmed when I read page 43 and saw the question

posed to Hideo Kojima, the designer of Metal Gear Solid: "Are you calling Western gamers poofs?" As a gay man I find this very insulting and completely unacceptable. I resent paying even a solitary pound to support a publication that feels it's okay to print such discriminatory rubbish. If this is a sign of things to come then I don't want to know. And I haven't even mentioned the Zelda article and its obsession with "fairies." Sad.

Matthew Prior, Norwich

Yep - a fair call. For what it's worth, the intended spirit of the question was very much a Sid the Sexist "Are you staring at my pint?" kind of joke thing. It doesn't sound funny now, but it was meant to be humourous. Still, we could have phrased it differently. As for fairies, come on - you've got to admit fairies are pretty funny. Which in no way at all leads us to...

Grey gunk

I think it's about time someone raised a voice to complain about the state of the N64's controllers. You pay £20 only to find that they disintegrate. I'm talking about the 3D sticks. Surely I'm not the only one who's noticed that after a while they fill up with a mysterious

grey gunk and begin to become looser but harder to move? I really began to notice the difference in the sticks just recently when I bought a new green one. Playing with the old controllers is now considered a disadvantage and so we

take turns to use each of the controllers. It's ridiculous

Nick Smith, via e-mail

We've heard from a couple of people with this problem. But how widespread is it? Write in and let us know if you're experiencing grey gunk problems.



■ The real life Lara: very much "in the flesh."

Get 'em off

Can I have just a quick word about the Nell McAndrew interview? Look, we really don't need another Loaded/ForWankingMonthly mag on the shelves, so can you stay clear of the mucky pictures? Especially when they have no relevance to the way that most gamers will know Nell, as Lara Croft.

Besides, she looks a damn sight sexier dressed as Lara than she does as her stripped-bare-as-a-Christmas-turkey-readyfor-(ahem)-roasting-Yorkshire self.

Gary Ransley-Miller, via e-mail

Okay, but not everyone thinks this way...

Keep 'em on

You guys scared me for a minute there. First a creepy-looking Sir Clive Sinclair staring out at me with those come-to-bed eyes, then just about the campest shot of that South Park bloke I've ever seen. I was beginning to worry that Arcade was taking a bit of an unpleasant turn. Thank God, then,

for the Nell McAndrew shots that followed. Okay, so the set was all a bit FHM, but it made a nice antidote to the normal parade of ugly blokes you get in games magazines...

Nell is a genuine gaming personality (of sorts), after all, and not just some Page Three wannabe trollop like you see in some mags. And the sort of lass vou wouldn't mind

going for chips with either, if your interview is anything to go by. Keep it up guys (I know I will)

■ Nintendo 64's

joypad: built to bust?

Matt Rhodes, Bradford

Here's the deal. On the one hand, we completely agree with Gary's letter: there are too many magazines that use shots of

Issue three

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AYER 9/10



Play Magazine 90%







ants Rave

Bloody expensive

It's quite obvious but it needs saying anyway: games are too bloody expensive! One of the many excuses given by publishers for £40-plus prices is a need to recoup development costs. This, on the surface, seems fair enough but the movie Titanic cost hundreds of millions of pounds to make and yet you can pick up the video for 15 quid! Surely Sony's Platinum range shows that games could cost just £20 a go, so why not be this price all the time?

Nathan Percival, via e-mail

Yes, new games are expensive. But you can't compare them to videos or Platinum games because in both these cases the publisher has already recouped a lot of his costs (the movie in the cinema, the game at full price) so any extra revenues can be considered "icing on the cake." We'll be looking at this whole "Games. Bloody expensive. Discuss." debate in a later issue.

Five stars

Arcade's five-star scoring system is way insufficient. There's no point in going over the top and giving ridiculous percentages (how many reviewers ever seriously agonise over the difference between awarding 72% or 73%?) but the difference between, say, a three-star (60%) and a four-star (80%) rating is far too wide. Surely scoring out of ten is a lot more preferable.

Dan Ayers, via e-mail

We think five stars are just fine. Face it, in most magazines that use percentages anything under 70% is "crap" and anything over 90% is "brilliant". In reality, they use only a range of 20 points. We don't suggest that you translate our star ratings

near arcade perfect conversion of Virtua Fighter 3tb? It really couldn't get better than this. Godzilla is disappointing but Pen Pen is great graphically, especially the later tracks.

But this is almost all irrelevant, in that you should never judge a console by its first games. Look how much better Gran Turismo is than the first Ridge Racer.

PlayStation has just got so much better with time, and I'm sure Dreamcast will do exactly the same thing

James McLaren Sheffield

This is one point of view.

Dreamcast sucks

I was one of the suckers who paid over the odds to be one of the first Dreamcast owners in the country. It sounded so good on paper I couldn't wait to get hold of one. So, the day after it launched in Japan, I rushed out and paid in excess of £500 for this so-called "dream" machine. Unfortunately, however, I am left totally disappointed with it. Okay, so the graphics are great but the games are as shallow as those that sank the Saturn. I bought Godzilla Generations and Virtua Fighter 3tb expecting great things especially from VF3. But in reality it doesn't even come close to the sheer gameplay excellence of Tekken 3 on PlayStation.

It's a real shame - and I warn all other Arcade readers to think carefully before wasting an awful lot of money

Christopher Jamieson Nairn, Scotland

And this is another. Our look at Dreamcast starts on page 46 of this issue.

Time warped

Just a quick query about "December 1984" (Arcade 1, "Retroview", page 175). So Bob

Geldof did "Live Aid" and followed that with "Do they know its Christmas" did he? Funny that, because everyone else remembers is as the other way round, "Do they know its Christmas" was released in 1984 and "Live Aid" followed up later. Dave Clarke, via e-mail

Yes, yes, yes. Well done.

Flap confusion Why the flap on the front cover of Arcade 1?

I couldn't find a single reason for it. Also, how about a feature on the

game content that is edited from UK versions of games? Worms lost the Batarang in the UK version, Soul Blade had a previously naked chick with clothes on and Resident Evil lost its gory introduction.

John Panter Wigan

The flap was a cunning magazine publishers ploy to: a) let us put a nice big picture on the front of the magazine without cluttering it up with words; b) get unsuspecting readers such as yourself to pick it up and "interact" with the magazine to see what's underneath. The idea is that if you pick it up, you're more likely to buy it.

So that's another one of our trade secrets blown..

■ Sega's Dreamcast: will you spend £400 on one this weekend?

Arcade exit poll

■ We want to make Arcade the only videogame magazine you'll ever need. Help us by filling out this form (or copy it on to a bit of paper) when you write to Arcade

The	best	bits	this	issue	are:

10000		origin	10,00	Maca.	BO LO

I didn't like

think along the lines of one star equating to 70%, two stars 75%, and so on, up to five stars equating to 90%-plus.

to percentage points, but if you have to,

Dreamcast rules

Dreamcast is fantastic. I got mine on the 28th November, the day after it launched in Japan and I got a good deal, too. I only paid £600 for the Dreamcast, two pads and all four launch games.

Some of my friends say that they are underwhelmed by it, but I have to ask them what more they could expect than a





■ Bob Geldof fed the world, but when?

CONTRIBUTORS

It's all their fault. Among Arcade's contributors this month you'll find...



Rich Pelley

We spotted staff writer Rich twiddling his thumbs in the corner of the office earlier this month so we decided to pack him off to London to talk about Arcade on national television. We forgot to mention that by national we meant Channel 5,

and that he would be appearing live at 620am so it was a very sleepy-eyed Mr Pelley who graced our early-morning screens. "I thought they were just going to chat about Tomb Raider," he explains, meekly, "but instead they interrogated me about the magazine and accused me of being a videogame geek." Time for a retaliatory blow: "The studio was like a shed, the presenter had never heard of Nintendo and the tea was awful."

Game of the moment: San Francisco Rush on N64. "Everyone else hates it, but I think it's good, honest fun, so I'm making it my cause célebre for the month."



Jason Brookes

One of our four regular columnists, Jason is one of the most respected games journalists on the planet. As editor of EDGE magazine for five years he's forgotten more about videogames than most of us will ever know. Now he's

taking some time off and is a roving correspondent in Japan and America. "There's so much in the world to see and do," he says, "I'm enjoying taking the time to smell the roses." Will he come back to videogame journalism full time? "Maybe," he says, "it's easy to get cynical about the games industry - there are so many companies trying to sell crap. But games are still a great way to relax and have a laugh with your mates. I'll always enjoy them."

Game of the moment: Zelda 64 on N64: "Final proof that Shigeru Miyamoto is the best games designer ever."



Jude Edginton

Jude has been photographing the videogame industry's mightiest and finest for the last seven years. His pictures of Shigeru Miyamoto (starting on page 66) were taken on four separate occasions over this time period, in three different

countries. His work has taken him all over the world including San Francisco, where he won "Photographer of the Year" award from the Bay Guardian, the city's equivalent of Time Out magazine. "Taking photographs of games creators is tricky, because unlike musicians or film makers they often don't seek the limelight," he says. "But it's easy, too, because usually they're down-to-earth people who appreciate that posing for a shoot is just part of their job." Game of the moment: "I don't play games," says Jude, "I've met too many of the nutcases who make them..."



Alvin Weetman

As Arcade's Deputy Art Editor, Alvin's been in charge of togging up the team for the Games Night photoshoots. Last month he trekked across mountainous terrain (or at least to the other side of town) to hire out snowboarding gear, and this issue he

had to pay a visit to the army surplus store. "They were a bit annoyed when they found we'd written 'Born To Kill' on one of their helmets – and they wanted to know who Mark was. In the end I had to buy it off them and now I wear it around the office. My favourite part of the Games Night is making the guys pull stupid faces and then picking the ones that look worst to go in the magazine. They all have to give me respect or I can embarrass them in print."

Game of the moment: Pocket Fighter on PlayStation: "It's just completely mad. One of the characters will suddenly leap on the back of a donkey and start kicking his opponent."



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us out of a

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The world of videogames: we take you round the globe in four pages



PC game recreates Operation Desert Fox for NBC TV | TV ratings soar

By Neil West

■ The fine line between videogames and the real world became a little more blurred in late December, courtesy of Electronic Arts and US TV giant NBC. As planes from the US and UK continued cruise missile bombing raids on the Iraqi capital of Baghdad as part of Operation Desert Fox, finishing touches were being put to a recreation of the initial attack, using EA's forthcoming PC title Jane's Fleet Command. As coverage of the military action continued round the clock, **NBC** broadcast extensive footage of EA's re-creation.

Jane's Combat Simulations (an affiliate of EA) is recognised as being a world leader in the

military simulations field. Jane's Fleet Command, a complex realworld naval strategy game, was selected for the re-creation for its detailed maps of the Middle East and its accurate 3D models of the worlds' naval forces, Indeed, it was designed with specific reference to the previous Gulf conflict of 1991, with a view to offering gamers a glimpse of what it was to "be there". In addition, another EA game - Jane's F-15 - was used by NBC to offer a pilot's eye views of possible attack scenarios from the cockpit of the game's virtual F-15 fighter plane. NBC is believed to be working on further footage in cooperation with the Jane's team for use as the conflict in the Gulf develops.

"Jane's is a resource for anybody who wants to report about the military," said EA's Kristen McEntire. "The Jane's information group - from which EA licenses the Jane's Combat Simulations name – has served as a military reference source for decades. If a news organisation uses a Jane's computer game as a military resource then that's just extending the tradition."

This TV exposure is a first for videogames and, while it's far from Arcade's desire to trivialise the Iraqi conflict, it's undeniable

proof that videogames are going places never gone before.

) BERILIGTO BERILIGTO BERILIGTO BL

It's a tentative celebration, however. While we salute the advancement of EA's technology, we're also left pondering on the irony of a conflict already reliant on distant button pushes to decide the fate of millions, soon to be repackaged as a £40 videogame thrill.



Destroy "The Madman"

Videogames return to the Gulf

■ This isn't the first time heavily armed attack Middle East. Shortly after Operation Desert Storm kicked off in 1990, EA released Desert Strike for the Mega Drive.

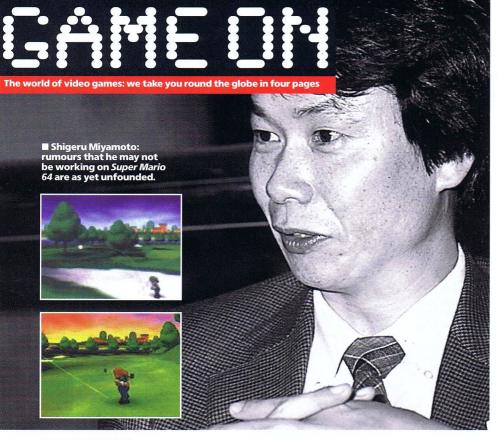
chopper, the aim was to single-handedly take out the growing arsenal of highly naughty military equipment belonging to a man referred to as "The Madman". He had a

big moustache. In the sequel, Jungle Strike, the son of The Madman invaded the USA. Your first mission was to save the White House. Barging past Ms Lewinsky on the way in, no doubt...



As Cruise missiles landed on Iraq, EA put the finishing touches to its recreation





SHOCK HORROR

Mario 2 Not true

Super Mario 64 sequel may not happen | Miyamoto "tired" | Eek!

ans of Nintendo's red-bereted plumber hero are liable to break out in a cold sweat upon hearing the latest news leaking out of Japan. Apparently, Nintendo's top designers (under the leadership of Shigeru Mivamoto) worked so hard in order to finish Zelda: Ocarina Of Time that Mario 642, originally scheduled for 1999, has still not even been started.

Worrying remarks made by Mr Miyamoto himself have lead bystanders to speculate that, amazingly, he may skip any involvement in the development of *Mario 64 2* all together. Further rumours suggest that the game may eventually appear on an asyet unspecified "new system", if it

sees the light of day at all.

Nintendo gamers are unlikely to be fully placated by the announcement of another Mario offshoot title. Following on from Mario Party and Smash Brothers (see Coming Soon, page 24), behold Mario Golf, a cartoon pitch 'n' putt which will feature a range of Nintendo characters with whom to birdie and bogey your way round eight courses. The 3D scenery should be recognisable to anyone familiar with Mario's other-world adventures, while the gameplay makes use of this-world ball physics.

All of these new *Mario*-related games will undoubtedly live up to Nintendo's seal of quality. But they're scant consolation for platforming purists. Still, these are just *rumours*.

Mario 2 may appear on an unspecified "new system"

NEU GAME

Go Ape For Tarzan

Adventure game tie-in for Disney's big summer movie

ime to strip down to your loincloth, batter your chest and swing about on vines – *Tarzan* is

Disney's big animated movie for 1999 and Sony has jumped right in there to get its hands on the PlayStation licence.

Despite the grand tradition of totally toss movie tie-in games, here's hoping that developer

Eurocom makes a good job of the be-loinclothed one – after all it made a *great* job of *Mortal Kombat 4* and *Hercules*. Sony is heaping money on the project and with the film, voiced by Tony Goldwin and Minnie Driver, likely to be a smash, look out for the 3D *Tarzan* action/adventure game near the top of the charts come next autumn.









DDD INCOMINGDO

Six of the best new games coming your way...

3 months



Milo's Astro Lanes

■ N64 ■ Interplay ■ Spring '99

It's a cross between ten-pin bowling and crazy golf. In space, naturally. Power-ups for the two-player mode include an acid shower.

6 months



Dragon Valor ■ PlayStation ■ Namco

■ Summer '99

RPG-tinged adventure

boasting generations of

gameplay. Yes, your hero

buys the farm and you

continue as his son and heir.

9 months



Starsiege Tribes PC Dynamix

Autumn '99

Cyborgs and robots battle to the death on a distant planet in this futuristic blend of shooter and strategy.



Magical Truck Adventure

■ Coin-Op ■ Sega ■ Autumn '99

More Japanese mayhem. This time you've got to pump the paddles Laurel and Hardy-style to propel your cart along the track.





Racing Lagoon ■ PlayStation ■ Square ■ Late '99

Swish touring car racer with an animé feel and proposed RPG elements. Trust the developer (Square's tops) not the game name.



Carrier ■ Dreamcast ■ Jaleco ■ Winter '99

Expansive action adventure set on a spacecraft full of zombies. Ground breaking Al enables you to work as part of a rescue team. Hopefully this will be fun.



GAME GEAR

Metal Gear Solid Gear

Limited Edition Premium Packs scheduled for UK | "Be" Solid Snake

By Sam Richards

o make up for the frustrating slippage of the Metal Gear Solid release date (now set for 26 February '99), Konami will be bundling limited copies of the PlayStation game in special Premium Packs, exclusive to the UK. At time of writing,

the content of the bundle is still being confirmed, but it is likely to include a Metal Gear Solid T-shirt, a book of original artwork, stickers and a CD containing music from the game. As for the price of the Premium Pack, Arcade is assured that "it won't cost much more than an ordinary game".

Konami UK also hopes to strike a deal with US action figure maker McFarlane Toys to bring its new range of action figures to this country. There are eight figures in the series - Solid Snake, Liquid Snake, Mervl, Vulcan Raven, Ninja, Revolver Ocelot, Sniper Wolf and Psycho Mantis. Each is six inches high and comes with its own

weapons and accessories. Even if you don't want to kneel on the floor re-enacting scenes from the game (and we really don't) the figures should make a cool addition to any voodoo-

The pack is likely to include a T-shirt, a book of artwork and a CD

Smack mv pitch up

Another of Arcade's game ideas gets sent to an unfortunate expert.

SHRINK RAP

Looks Familiar

This month Dr Mark Griffiths, our resident psychologist, sorts out the marketing men. About time too.

One of the aspects of videogaming I have observed over the last five years is the way in which games designers and marketeers will use almost every ploy they can to get you to play their latest game. The tactics are becoming ever more and more sophisticated - not least because the gaming market itself is increasing in sophistication as the teenage game players of yesteryear are continuing to play games into their twenties, thirties and bevond.

One of these favoured ploys (whether the perpetrators realise it or not) is the psychology of familiarity. The games manufacturers have realised that one heavy weapon in their huge marketing armoury is to design games which appear familiar before a gamer has ever played them. This can be achieved through using recognisable characters,

worlds and names - or new names which parody or pun on a topical subject. If the man in the games shop recognises something be more likely to buy that game. One of the most

commonly deployed tactics to induce familiarity is the creation of games based on films and television shows.
There is little doubt that games featuring cult TV shows like Star Trek and The X-Files will sell very well because completists will want to own all the associated paraphernalia. What's more, it's clear that a game with familiar and popular central characters can sell by the shedload despite the consensus of opinion suggesting a poor game (Spice World, for example). This may be good news for the makers of The Fifth Element, but it's frustrating for gamers.

I know first hand that there are spin-offs with good gameplay (I've played my fair share of GoldenEye 007) but these games appear to be the exception rather than the rule.

My basic argument is that games with TV or movie components have the capacity to make players attend to them longer than they would ordinarily. After initial exposure these games may even induce psycho-structural interactions and relationships for the player, Therefore, if the themes are increasingly "familiar", a player will be increasingly likely to persevere with the complexities of a game and find it more enjoyable. At least as far as marketing and packaging goes, the game's industry knows what it's doing

■ Dr Mark Griffiths lectures at Nottingham Trent University.

No. 3 Rules Explosion!

Maybe your player

will lob the ball in

the air, maybe he'll

try to kick it towards

he'll run along trying

the posts or maybe

to bounce it like a

knows? It'll be just

Eurosport at 3am.

basketball, Who

like watching

■ The pitch: Welcome to the world's craziest sport sim! Those wacky dudes down under are bringing their mad, random, and unduly physical game Aussie Rules to our consoles. Although the ingame tactical editor is immensely complex, it's entirely superfluous. Rules Explosion utilises a revolutionary new control system which perfectly replicates a real game of Aussie Rules: joypad buttons are not assigned a particular function.

but a

sequence of

presses will

at random.

activate moves

■ The response: "I think the northern hemisphere has been crying out for an Antipodean free-forall game for decades. The control method

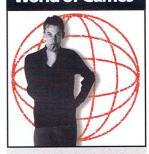
is nothing new, having already been

done in Rise Of The Robots, but no matter, there is still room for innovation elsewhere. I particularly like the potential for player creation. You could assign important attributes such as tolerance to tinnies of the amber nectar. mullets rated by aerodynamic quality (streamlined speed trades off with increased "hang time") and a player's ability to catch and strip a sheep. Never was a game more apt for a top scorer called Shearer!" Ade Carless, Senior Games Designer,

■ Next month: Another crap pitch gets slapped.

Gremlin.

Sam Richards' **World of Games**



Paperboy delivers

■ How fondly we remember those evenings in sea-front arcades attempting to lob papers into mailboxes and avoiding being mown down at the crossroads. Yes, bleary nostalgia has once again prompted a developer to brave the retro game revival minefield. This time it's littleknown Jaguar coder High Voltage Software with its Paperboy 3D update. The game, set for N64 and PlayStation, won't be ready until winter. Somebody rouse Debbie Greenwood.

N64 goes on-line

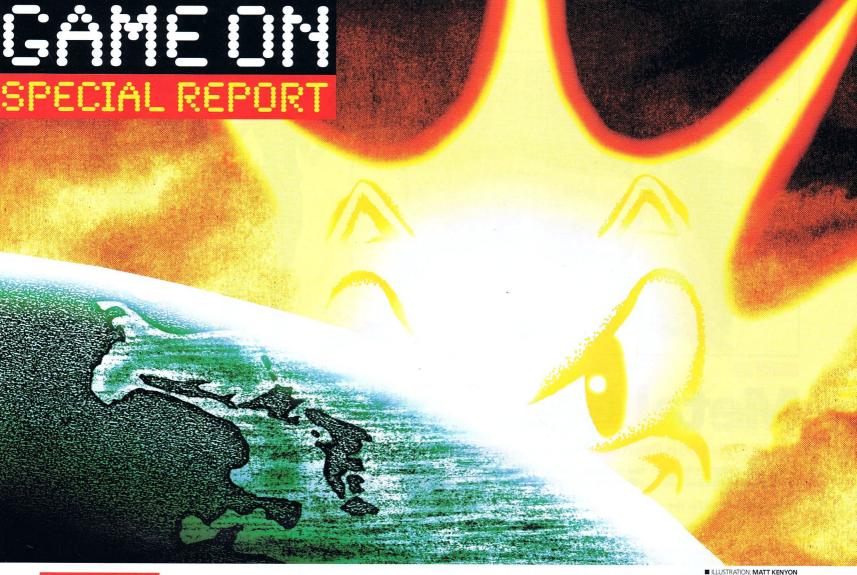
■ Nintendo is soon expected to announce plans for a modem add-on for N64. This will supposedly allow for Internet access and enable gamers to download additional game data like extra levels and secret characters. It's best to remain sceptical, however, as we bear in mind the 64DD, a disk drive add-on talked about since the launch of Nintendo 64. Two years later there's still no sign of it.

Fancy it tonight or what?

Ah yes, the refreshing alternative realities of Japanese RPGs. First there's Dreamcast title Climax Landers - eerily, you're not sure where you are or why you're there. Then we have Dragon Valor (see Incoming) where you get to play your own kid when you pop your clogs. Now Atlus brings Thousand Arms to the PlayStation in which you need to date the laydeez in order to "extend your spirit level". No sniggering, now.

G-Police Refuels With Diesel

Psygnosis has again teamed up with Diesel, that doyenne of clothing cool, for the sequel to its highlyanticipated G-Police, a game subtitled Weapons Of Justice. The original copter-blasting title saw Diesel advertising find its way mysteriously on to the buildings in Callisto's domed-cities while the company knocked up some limited-edition jackets, T-shirts and sweaters bearing the G-Police logo in return. Fly.



NEWS ANALYSIS

A new dawn for Sega as Dreamcast launches in Japan. Next stop, the UK

Panic on the streets of Tokyo | Sonic the Hedgehog conspicuous by his absence...

By Dave Roberts

here were queues, of course there were queues. At least there were pictures of queues. But that's only because back in the late '80s the Japanese government passed a law making it illegal to launch any new console without it being accompanied by a selection of horribly contrived press reports of stores opening at midnight, frantic punters suffocating in the crush, besieged shop owners calling the riot police, blah, blah, blah. There were queues for 3DO for goodness sake.

Never heard of 3DO? Exactly. And there was a suspicion of stagemanagement surrounding Dreamcast's arrival in Sega's homeland. The only genuine sense of urgency emanating from the firm's PR company, desperately processing beautiful pictures of packed games shops. There were also a few back-stage cock-ups, with production problems and yet more game delays taking the shine off Sega's return to the spotlight.

Just to recap, the importance of Dreamcast to Sega simply cannot be overestimated. The company used to be the dominant force in the

global games market, with its Mega Drive out-gunning all rivals in the early '90s. But it's had a torrid time since then, with a series of stop-gap bridging products such as Mega CD and 32X leading eventually to the full scale disaster that was Saturn: launched just a few months before the arrival of PlayStation, and found dead in the water just a few months later. That's why Dreamcast is literally a do-or-die format for the firm. And its early reception in Japan was the first real test of its power.

It arrived on 27 November (impressively enough the exact date it was targeting nearly a year ago, before delays pushed the

system's launch back a year) priced at Y29,800 (£150). This would suggest we'll see a UK price of £199 next autumn.

Sega had hoped to deliver 300,000 Dreamcasts to



Japanese gamers in the first weekend, but in the end could only muster less than half that number. Its plans were hit hard by problems with Dreamcast's graphics chip, a component designed by leading-edge UK technology firm VideoLogic and manufactured by Japanese electronics group NEC. Sega's PR team initially tried to cover-up its predicament with bullish talk of demand far out-stripping supply. While this was technically true, it failed to acknowledge the fact that this was simply because supply was woefully short of its own original projections.

The rumours of potential shortages had been circulating



for a while. Sega's president Shoichirio Irimaiiri admitted, a couple of weeks before launch. that NEC's production was running at only about 30% of the company's anticipated levels. It has subsequently improved and Sega insists it is back on track to hit its first significant target: one million machines delivered to Japanese shops by March 31st. If it fails to catch-up, however, the knock-on effect could be a late launch in Europe. Certainly Sega wouldn't consider making a move anywhere else in the world until supply is plentiful in Japan.

Sega Europe also needs its parent company to make a full success of Dreamcast on its home turf, because it knows that the console won't make any sort of impact over here without a massive marketing war chest. The firm's currently projecting a \$100 million spend this year, but that will be funded by Dreamcast sales in Japan. Saturn certainly isn't generating any revenue. Its PC games are doing okay, but they're not going to drum up the sort of cash needed to push Dreamcast into a position alongside Sony's all-conquering PlayStation.

At least a delay may help Sega get its games in order in time for Dreamcast's UK launch. On 27 November, just four games were available and only one, Virtua Fighter 3tb, came complete with built-in "wow" factor. The others Godzilla Generations, Pen Pen Tricelon and July - appealed to various niche markets to differing

degrees. Not the stuff on which great businesses can be built. Unfortunately, the two most eagerly anticipated Dreamcast titles, Sonic Adventure and Sega Rally Championship 2 were both delayed. As Arcade 3 goes to press, Sonic Adventure is set to be released in Japan. Sega Rally 2 is expected in mid-January

If that dynamic duo had been available from launch, alongside VF3tb, then Dreamcast really would have rocketed off the blocks, undeniably off to a flyer. As it is, a lot of gamers have elected to wait before parting with their cash. While this is bad news for current Dreamcast owners, it's a good sign that Sega is willing to take flak for being late if the result will be two properly polished, truly great games.

By the end of February, Dreamcast's catalogue of games will have grown to 14 with

Monaco Grand Prix and Incoming (a conversion of Rage's PC hit and the first Dreamcast title from a UK development

team) amongst the most prominent forthcoming attractions. Sega hopes that around 30 titles will be on hand to support the European launch.

One of the most interesting aspects of Dreamcast's Japanese debut has been the strong takeup of Dreamcast's on-line facilities. The console comes bundled with a modem and Dream Passport software that provides users with Internet access - one of the main ideas being to encourage net gaming throughout a Dreamcast

Apparently one-in-three of the first 150,000 consumers has

A lot of gamers are keeping their cash until Dreamcast games get better logged on and signed up. Sega European boss Chris Deering

claims this is a higher ratio than it expected and it could have some bearing on whether or not a modem is bundled in Europe or comes as a standalone peripheral. That crucial decision (which will also effect pricing, obviously) is being made round about now.

So was Dreamcast's launch a success? It suffered from glitches, undoubtedly, but Sega makes a convincing enough case to give it a pass mark after its first examination, with "Can do better" the inevitable caveat. Sony Computer Entertainment's

elects to reserve judgement, but still can't hide an element of condescension in his assessment: "We are respectful of Sega's ambitions, but they still have a lot of baggage from the past. Certain hobbyists try all new game systems. Whether Saturn 2" [ouch] "can get beyond this group remains to be seen." But then he would say that.

■ Want to know more? Dreamcast is on page 46. You'll find reviews of all the games starting on page 132.

Who's hanging out in arcades these days? Arcade skives off and has a thoroughly good laugh, all in the name of research



THIS MONTH

Slot check

- Place: **Segaworld**
- Where: The Trocadero, 1 Piccadilly Circus, London, W1
- Size: 110,000 sq ft over six floors
- Games: Over 400 coin-ops and simulators, mostly (but not exclusively) Sega
- How much? Free entry, games cost £1 per go
- Telephone: 0171 734 2777■ Opening hours: Sun-Thurs, 10am-midnight; Fri-Sat, 10am-1am. Open all year except Christmas day

he games are expensive, there's a big bias towards Sega (obviously), it lacks a little soul (there are no old classics – and fag butts are decidedly think on the ground) and, at the other

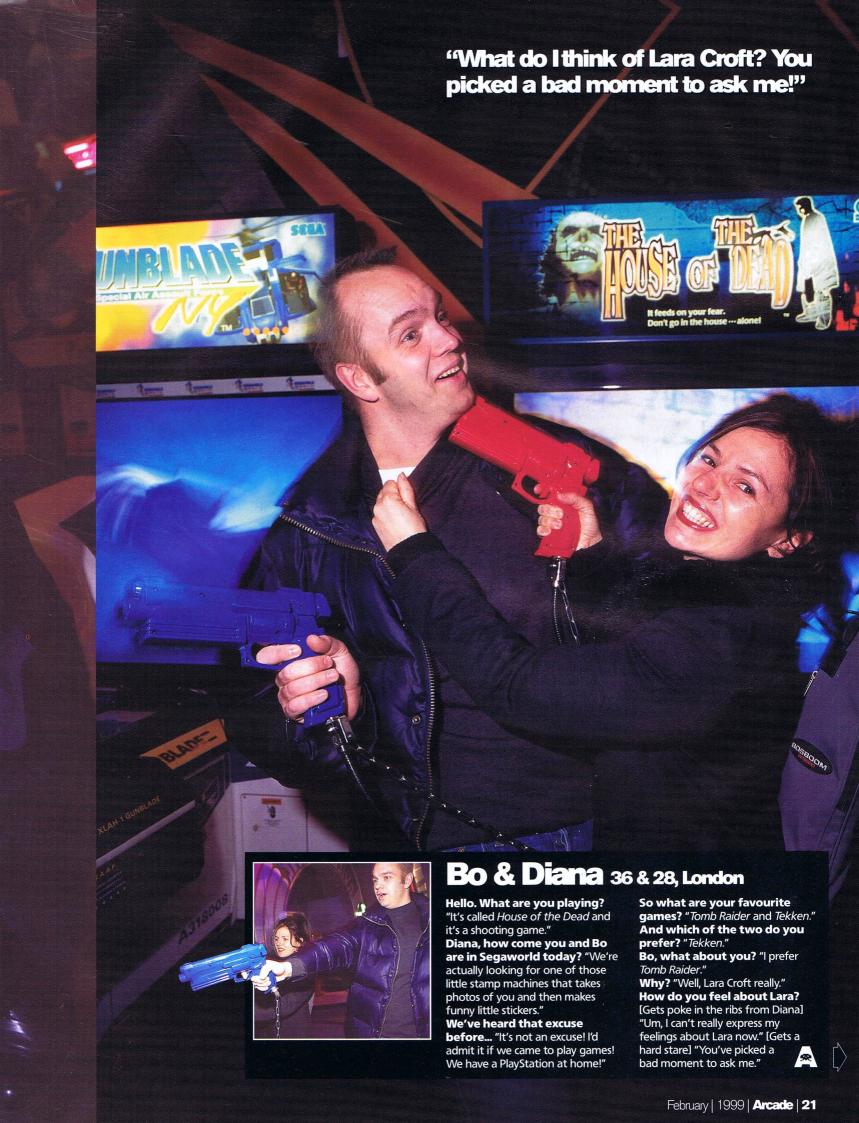
extreme, where's all of the state-of-the-art stuff? Why was there no SpikeOut? But, all this aside, Segaworld rocks. It's easy to pop in if you're in

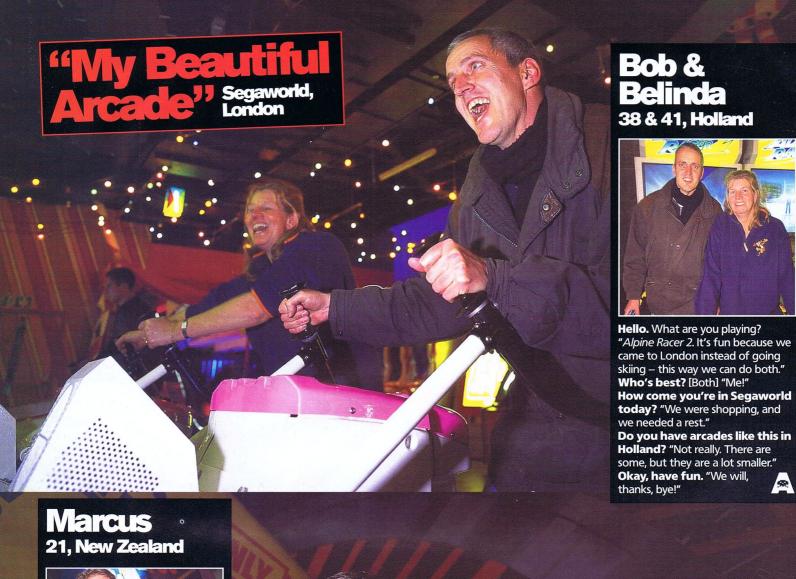
London; the people are friendly and there's loads of extra stuff to do - there's even an IMAX cinema. A visit is also a great opportunity to brush up on your foreign languages.













Hello. What are you playing?
"It's Gunblade New York, you get to
fly around in a helicopter blasting
terrorists with a machine gun."
You like it? "Yeah! The gun's got a

You like it? "Yeah! The gun's got a great recoil action – it feels just like the real thing."

Do you come to Segaworld often? "I've only been in England for three weeks, but I've come here a couple of times."

Do you play games at home? "Of course. I share a house with some other guys and we've got a PlayStation. My favourite game is *Gran Turismo*."

Have you checked out those Italian girls playing *Time Crisis 2?* "Yeah, but they're a little young." **Right, they're only 15 and 16.** "That's too bad."

Hmm. Never mind, eh? "Yeah. Still, there are plenty more fish in the sea."





Lorenza & Piera 15 & 16, Italy

Hello. What are you playing? "It is called *Time Crisis 2*. We like this game. It's fun to shoot things."

What bought you to

What bought you to Segaworld? "We wanted to play in Segaworld in the Trocadero because in Italy it is very famous." Really? "Yes. We have nothing like this in Italy. My little brother will be very jealous when he finds out that we've been here. But we're not

here to play games. We're here to meet boys." [giggles] So you like boys who play videogames? "Of course. As long as they do other things as well." **Had any luck?** "We saw two nice
English boys just now, but I think
you scared them off."

Hey, that's the law of the jungle, right? "I don't know what you mean."

Um, do you play videogames at home? "I play FIFA on PlayStation." What's the best team? "Italy, of course. They are a far better team than England. I will challenge anyone to beat me."

Well, happy hunting!
"Okay, ciao!"

*



"We're not here to play games. We're here to meet boys." Write to us at My Beautiful Arcade. Arcade, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW Fax us on: 01225 732375 E-mail us at: arcade.mag@futurenet.co.uk

COLLING SOUTH SAWAY











■ Diving, bowling, throwing things at Bowsers, inflating a ghost with a bicycle attached to a dynamo and pump — it will be the mini sub-games that make Mario Party special. You will play some solo, while others are expected to involve the other players. You can rest assured that social interaction ranks highly on Nintendo's development agenda.

MARIO PARTY

Mario's back, he's having a party and everyone's invited. Mario, Wario, Yoshi, Princess Daisy, Luigi and Donkey Kong will all be there, and you can gatecrash with three of your mates.

■ IN A NUTSHELL: Mario Party takes the familiar Mario universe and implements it in a family-style boardgame, but with plenty (and we do mean plenty) of Nintendo magic.

t's so often the problem. You have a few friends around for dinner, make the effort, put on *The Best Classical Album In The World Ever*, iron your shirt, buy the food from Waitrose (or, if you want to really impress, from Marks & Spencer), serve nibbles and aperitifs, dish up the main course, blowtorch a couple of crème brûlées for desert, scrape the mould off the cheese in the fridge (where applicable) and then, blimey!

You've forgotten the after-dinner entertainment. There's an N64 under the TV, but somehow blasting each other's brains out with Kalashnikovs and Magnum RCP 40s in multi-player DeathMatch *GoldenEye* doesn't quite seem to fit with the mood.

More social interaction is called for – you need something that will stimulate conversion and ensure that your guests aren't eyeing the cloakroom for their coats. A boardgame, perhaps? Where's that *Monopoly* set gone?



As you can see from all of As you can see from all of these pretty pictures, as soon as Nintendo decided to do a board-style game, it stirred in plenty of traditional Nintendo ingredients. Visually *Party* looks as good as any other Mario Family game, and you can be sure the gameplay will be just as deep and absorbing.

But you've lost all the hotels, and no one ever wants to be the Boot. Come on, N64, you must have something to offer to save the day?

Enter, through cigar smoke and the nose of a good brandy, Mario Party, a boardgame, but for your N64. Video boardgames are almost always shouted down from the outset as being: "a bad idea." They are inconvenient (it's easier to play at a table than huddled around a telly), over-complicated (it's hard to maintain a polite, caring smile as you explain the function of a joypad to your Granny for the fourteenth time) and, in many cases, they are redundant: why shell out for the virtual version of a family classic that you've got sitting under your bed anyway?

But this is Nintendo, and those rules don't hold. Mario Party is set

THE SUB-GAMES FEATURE ALL OF SPAN A VARIETY OF GAME STYLES

FACT FILE

MARIO PARTY

FORMAT: N64 PUBLISHER:

NINTENDO DEVELOPER:

PLAYERS: 1-4 ON SALE: TBA

do get to roll dice, but the similarities to other board games ends there. Each square holds one of 50 different sub-games each one of which will earn you coins and stars. The sub-games feature all your Nintendo Favourites and span a variety of

round the basic board format, and you

and others to involve any number of the other players sat round the TV.

There are eight different gaming boards available, each hosted by familiar characters, and called things like Mario's Rainbow Castle, Yoshi's Tropical Island and Donkey's Jungle Adventure. The board layout is

reminiscent of the level pathway map layout of Super Mario on the SNES with its zigzag routes and zany, colourful landscape, but there's plenty of Mario World 64 influence, with large, 3D models of the characters, and even a tinge of

course of the game.

Mario Party features all the Nintendo favourites. As it's a party, we feel we should introduce you.

Wario ■ Mario's arch enemy and alter ego. Funny eyes, a jagged 'tache and lots and lots of attitude.



Mario
■ The most famous small, Italian plumber (with a moustache) in world, in any world actually.

Mario's pet dinosaur, has a similar relationship to Mario as Dino does to Fred Flintstone.



Donkey Kong,
■ An overweight, hairy gorilla (not a monkey). Predictably enough, he likes bananas.



Sweet, sugary, suggestive and she makes the luscious Lara Croft looks like Bella Emberg.



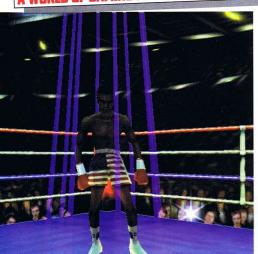
Luigi
■ Mario's younger, thinner brother. Wears green. Played by John Leguizamo in the movie.

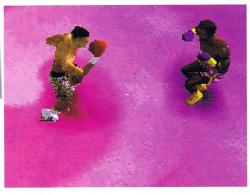
they've accumulated during the

The way to look at Mario Party is not just as boardgame, but as 50 mini multi-player N64 games linked together and tapping deep into the human competitive spirit in the way Nintendo does so well. Which'll be your favourite sub game? The two-player bowling one? The mini racing one? The bob-sleigh race? The diving one? The one where you each have to lob balls at big Koopas? The one where you all run around balancing on beach balls? From the screenshots (and unfortunately, so far screenshots are all we've seen), there's going to have to be something pretty special to beat the game where you have to inflate a ghost with a pump attached to a bicycle dynamo. We want to play it right now.

Mario Kart-style celebration screens where each player different gaming styles, stands on the pile of coins some to be played solo

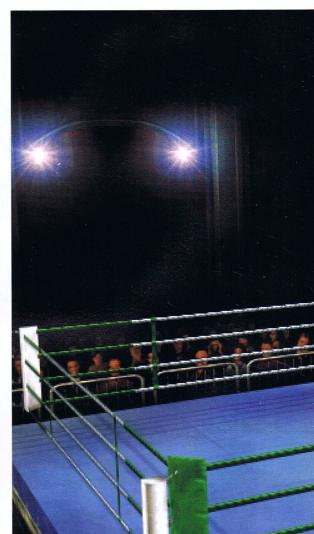
COMING SOCIAL A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY

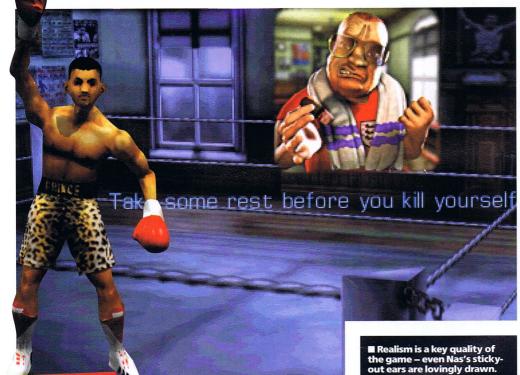












PRINCE NASEEM
BOX.

Succeed where others have failed. Go all the way with the ring king.

■ IN A NUTSHELL: Boxing game starring Britain's fasttalking, leopard-skin-wearing, undefeated champion.

dding Sheffield steel to the PlayStation's 1999 line-up is Codemasters' Prince Naseem Boxing. Endorsed by and starring boxing's own 24-year-old royal dignitary, the Codemasters game eschews conventional – and often sluggish – motion-captured boxers in favour of fighters with moves created after hours of scrutinising fight videos. The result is a game with all the speed and silky moves of Nas himself, and one which could well out-point the heavyweight competition from EA's Knockout Kings and JVC's Victory Boxing 2.

Naseem has been offering advice throughout the game's development and he's been keen to stress that complete control should be top of Codemasters' priorities. The PlayStation pad's buttons are used for the jabs, hooks and blocks, and Naseem-style body swerves and taunts are made using combinations of these and the shoulder buttons. Similarly, every bout Naseem participates in begins

with his customary somersault and shuffle into the ring, again at the Nas's request – and face it, you wouldn't want to turn him down...

Fights take place within a number of international rings, with each of 16 pugilists taking on challengers on their home turf. The boxers are somewhat unconventional to say the least, with Naseem lining up alongside a crew of squaddies, martial artists and punchdrunk old pros, all with distinctive fighting styles. The clichéd martial artist, for example, has lightning-fast reflexes, while the game's reigning champion – Slick Daddy Ellis – is undefeated in 14 title challenges.

Realism has been Codemasters watchword, but the tournaments mix featherweights with the Tyson-esque heavy brigade, and players adopt different techniques to defeat each

O wins



A GAME WITH ALL THE SPEED AND SILKY MOVES OF NAS HIMSELF

weight. This setup enables Codemasters to flex its animation muscles, with the assorted fighters performing dozens of moves.

The fighters are built on flexible skeletons, with a system that ensures realistic movement - heads snap back from a hit on the jaw and it's obvious when tiredness sets in. The level of detail extends to touches that include sweat flying as punches land.

Codemasters has included three full game modes. The arcade mode is a straight slug-fest for the title. You play each of the boxers in order, with Slick Daddy Ellis' title belt as the prize.

For wannabe Don Kings, the World Game reveals a strategic bent, as you guide one of 90 boxers to glory, controlling each aspect of the fighter. Training, diet and balancing the books are all part of the job, but this has been kept simple with the statistics cast aside in favour of an icon-driven interface. The final mode is a Practice mode set within Nas's gym, and all designed using photos taken from his Sheffield base camp.

Codemasters has worked hard to create a boxing game that also has arcade immediacy. The result reflects the style of its leopard-skin-wearing inspiration. Prince Naseem Boxing already out-points its rivals in terms of speed and boasts a fluid control system where your punches can be strung together to form flurries Nas himself would be proud of.

Playground British Bulldog? Ha! A game for kids. Take a look at this for ultra-violent tag.

■ IN A NUTSHELL: Formerly known as Tribal, Bloodlines combines sprinting around with lashings of violence and a big cast of tasty looking beat-'em-up characters. You'll only stop running when you have to start fighting...

h, the simple game of "chase". If you thought the off-ground and kissing variations were just about as exciting as the whole experience got, you'll need to brace yourself for Bloodlines. Sony's far-future, beat-'em-up take on

legging it round tagging people. Known as Tribal until very recently, Bloodlines takes the

favoured playground pastime of Kia-ora-addled children, shifts it into 3D arenas and introduces the sor of head-stoving unpleasantness you usually see in Mortal Kombat or Tekken. The basic aim is brutally simple. You and an opponent run around trying to change markers to your appointed colour by touching them. The first player to reach a marker becomes "it" and can then set off changing markers

the match. Tag someone and you win back control and can start changing the markers to your colour. It might sound pretty inoffensive, but the level of violence is far beyond

the dinner lady-troubling, jumper-

to their colour. The other player has

designated number needed to win

to tackle them before they reach the

pulling game of FACT FILE chase as the very BLOODLINES ■ FORMAT: young know it.

■ DEVELOPER ■ PUBLISHER: SONY
■ PLAYERS: 1-4
■ ON SALE IN UK:
FEBRUARY

up protagonists and each comes appropriately armed with special moves and combos that are used to tackle rivals. Expect to meet the likes

The 11 characters

look like beat-'em-

of Lupo Kahuna with his Earthquake special move and the incendiary boss character J.O.E (Judge Of Everyone) who can engulf opponents in a massive fireball.

Power-ups and great pick-up weapons litter the place. You can lay mines, shoot each other, put walls down to

suddenly block an opponent's path and, in the obviously named Marbles power-up, scatter small spheres on the ground to create moments of cool slapstick comedy. It all adds up to a very hectic bout of running around causing grief

Bloodlines is easy to pick up and play but, providing developer Radical Entertainment gets the balance right, should include the strategy of a sound beat-'em-up as well, as you try to find a way around an opponent's defences while making sure you're not prone to attack. It's sure to provoke plenty of swearing, particularly in the fourplayers-in-one arena multi-player mode. We'll review Bloodline's in the next issue of Arcade.



– it's a case of in this



FACT FILE

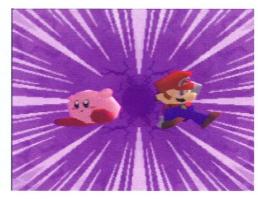
PRINCE NASEEM BOXING FORMAT: PC DEVELOPER PLAYERS: 1-8 ON SALE IN UK:

COMING SOLVER A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY

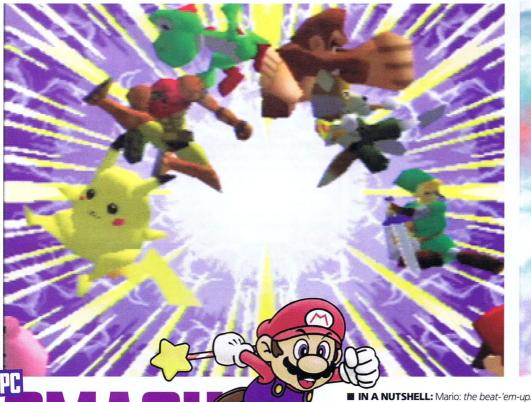














SMASH RRATHERS

Another excuse for the Family Nintendo to get together for a knees-up (and a big scrap). t's an age old question — who could have who in a fight? It's a question that can be also be applied to the notable and to the commonality alike. Vinnie Jones vs Grant Mitchell? Julian Clary vs John Inman? Your Dad vs my Dad? And how about the Nintendo game characters? Who would win if you stuck Mario and Donkey Kong into a ring and had them taunt "Your Mum does it for bananas", and "My 12-year-old cousin has more facial hair than you", respectively?

"My 12-year-old cousin has more facial hair than you", respectively?

One of the most interesting aspects of Smash Brothers (in which you do get to pit Nintendo superstars against each other), is the choice of characters on offer. It would have been easy for Nintendo to rehash the old favourites from Mario Kart, as happened in Mario Party (see page 24). Not that it would have been a bad thing, of course — Luigi sparring against Mario in a bit of sibling rivalry, the battle of the fattest as Donkey Kong takes on Bowser, or Princess Daisy standing up for women's rights as Toad takes a swift,

stiletto-clad kick in the groin – if, being a toadstool, he has one. But Nintendo, being Nintendo, decided that such a solution would be too obvious, and has instead waved a probing spotlight over its back catalogue to see which characters would prove the most interesting.

Remember Super Metroid on the SNES? A sort of side-viewed platformer set in space? You played Samus, a character clad in metallic armour who fantastically turned out (when you died) to be an attractive girl in a bikini. She's in it. Kirby, the cute little pink balloon with flippers who starred in a series of eponymous games, such as Kirby's Fun House, Kirby's Dream Land and Kirby's Bowling, is there too. As is Pikachu – a sweet little yellow pocket monster with pointy ears, who started life as



SURELY YOU CAN'T HIT FOX MCCLOUD. IT'D BE LIKE TRIPPING THE QUEEN MUM DOWN THE STAIRS

an official Nintendo Virtual Pet and progressed on to the Game Boy. One chap we can't quite believe to be here is Fox McCloud, the gentleman fox from StarWing on the SNES and Lylat Wars on the N64. He's an officer and a gentleman, you can't hit him, we thought. It'd be like tripping the Queen Mum down the stairs. And, fantastic as The Legend of Zelda is, you can't help wonder whether Link would be a good

character to pick in a beat-'em-up. He

does, after all, wear tights and a skirt and hang around with fairies.

It's the combination of these less expected Nintendo characters with the more predictable faces of Mario, Yoshi and Donkey Kong, however, that makes Smash Brothers sound so exciting.

All we've had our hands on so far are screenshots (which we share with you here), and a clutch of vague information: each character has his or her own specific arena, four players can play at a time and power-ups and obstacles play a crucial part. Also, each character has a special ability, for example Link uses his Master Sword, Fox McCloud uses his Blaster, and Yoshi can eat the opponents and lay them out as eggs (which, when you come to think about it, is pretty gross). We wait with bated breath.

STATION NINTENDO 64

The best thing to do with your friends and a game - racing and shooting combined.

FACT FILE

SSIXTY

FORMAT:

■ PUBLISHER: (
■ DEVELOPER:

SMART DOG
PLAYERS: 1-4
ON SALE: SPRING

other players before they kill you.

players can compete at a time

In split-screen mode, up to four

(presumably requiring a multi-tap on the PlayStation), and you can play

either full four-match games, or skip

straight to the battle arenas, if that's what your mood dictates.

know about 3 Sixty. We'll shut up,

then, and leave room for some

screenshots. A picture, after all,

paints a grand of words...

And, at the moment, that's all we

■ IN A NUTSHELL: Futuristic, waterbased racing game with weapons.

lobal warming's a bummer, isn't it? If only we'd all been content to put up with a bit of BO in the late '80s, instead of insisting that our armpits smell of Oriental and Java (whatever the hell they are), maybe we'd have been okay.

The melting of the ice caps and the gradual rise of sea levels is not something that 3Sixty's plot takes lightly. It's a futuristic racing game, where you speed about in mini skimming ships that look like rejects from an Alton Towers' water ride. The entire world has flooded and subsided so the courses are set in places such. as London (now covered in ice, thanks to a dramatic change in temperature), a theme park covered in lava and a dried-out sea bed

Each level is divided into four sub-levels. The first three are straight racetracks where your rewards for gaining a position in the placings are





throwers, cluster

You then use

the final arena,

bombs and so on.

these weapons in

where the idea is

one of survival -

you must kill the

■ Of course, the proof is always in the pudding with racing games, and fantastic as 35ixty sounds, it's not until we get our hands on a movable get our hands on a movable demo that we'll be able to come up with any final judgement. The screenshots look nice, though, don't they? We'll shut up now.

FACT FILE SMASH BROTHERS

- FORMAT: N64 DEVELOPER: HAL
- PUBLISHER:
- PLAYERS: 1-4 ON SALE: TBA



ALIENS VS PREDATOR

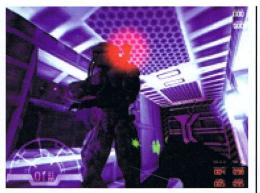
Many first-person shoot-'em-ups are scary, but Aliens Vs Predator, based on the Dark Horse comic of the same name, will scare the pants off you. Perhaps it's best not to wear any... ■ IN A NUTSHELL: First-person shooter played in one of three ways: as a Marine vs the Aliens and the Predators, as an Aliens vs the Marines and the Predators, or as a Predator vs the Aliens and the Marines. Got all that?

omics often bring together characters from different scenarios and pitch them together to see who rules: Superman vs Batman, the Hulk vs Judge Dredd, Aliens vs Predators. It's a fantastic idea, so why not move it to videogames?

Fox Interactive has done just that with this latest atmosphere-oozing slash fest for the PC which pits the frantic, slimy, merciless Aliens with their kamikaze-style attacks against the slower, more methodical, but invisible and just as merciless, Predators. Stick in a third side, the cannon-fodder we call the Marines, and what you've got is the backdrop to Aliens Vs Predator.

Firstly, we opted to play as the Marines. We had great fun frying the alien bastards alive with flame-throwers, watching them dance the merry jig of death as we blew their limbs off with the machine gun, and seeing their







RARELY BEFORE HAVE WE FELT SO UNDER THREAT IN A VIDEOGAME

torsos collapse into a pool of their own fluorescent blood.

world and beyond.

Despite this fire power, rarely before have we felt quite so under threat before in a videogame. Other first-person shooters have ugly baddies, but most of them appear in front of you giving you at least a fair chance to aim your bazooka or scarper pronto. Not so in Aliens Vs Predator. Just like in the films, the Aliens run all over the walls and ceilings, move like the clappers and attack from all angles.

We couldn't work out whether it was best to play it safe and try to pick them off from a distance, or just dive in with guns blazing and hope for the best. Both ways got us slaughtered. So the answer would seem to combine both stealth and speed.

Switching demo disks, there was just time to have a quick go as the Predator. We found playing as the Invisible One to be less frantic, but as we engaged our invisibility cloak and ripped the Aliens to shreds with our wrist blade, it was pleasingly just as bloody, atmospheric and nightmarish.

If the demos are anything to go by then Aliens Vs Predator looks like it is going to be a stonker of a game, implementing familiar sci-fi faces into a first-person blaster with a superb 3D engine, and really giving you a reason to hate and to kill. Your nightmares start here.

NINTENDO 64 **CHAMELEON TWIST 2**

Gorillas? Bears? Birds? Geckos? It doesn't look like Nintendo is going to run out of animals for you to play any time soon.

■ IN A NUTSHELL: Typical platformand-ladders-style game featuring a small lizard with a long tongue.

ou can spot an N64 platformer a mile off, if only because of the garish colours, happy Japanese-style music and general air of insanity. Chameleon Twist 2 is a strict platform game in the old-skool style, with the emphasis on staying alive while negotiating plenty of platforms, timed jumps and goodness knows what else. The twist is that you are a chameleon and you have a tongue - a long, flexible, versatile tongue that you can put to all sorts of uses. You can use it to swing from poles, to suck on to walls and to fling you high in the air in the manner of a pole-vaulter.

We've had a quick whizz over a pre-production copy, and while the



FACT FILE brought a smile to CHAMELEON 2 our faces, we had FORMAT: cause to frown for ■ DEVELOPER: two reasons. Our ■ PURLISHER: first eyebrow was lowered when we

although three dimensional, the whole game is played from a forced perspective requiring you to run and jump at some very specific angles. So you might have to cross a bridge by running left but ever so slightly out of the screen, or have to jump on to a platform into the screen but slightly to the right. The odd angles at which we had to push the analogue joypad proved annoying, and it's a problem that could have been avoided by making the camera rotatable. A second eyebrow quivered ever so slightly because of the number of leaps of faith that the game required - your progression is very much a case of remembering where you died last time round, and not doing it again.

noticed that,

Chameleon Twist 2 looks like its got potential though and, beyond a few initial niggles, it may well provide some fantastically amusing gameplay. Our eyebrows return to their normal position as we await the finished version.





FACT FILE

ALIENS VS PREDATOR

FORMAT: 7PG

■ PUBLISHER: PLAYERS: 1-2
ON SALE IN UK:
SPRING 1999

Garnes Insider

Four gaming experts. Their mission: to bring you a unique gaming perspective, each month, in five hundred words or so. It's a tough job. But...



TURNING JAPANESE

Jason Brookes

Sega's dream becomes reality in Tokyo. Our man in Japan joined the queues.

S

o there I was. I'd set the alarm clock especially early, hopped on the JR Line and by 8.30am on 27 November I was outside an electronics store in the bustling Shinjuku district of Tokyo. One of

those Dreamcasts was as good as mine.

There was little evidence of sleeping bags, camping cookers or, thankfully, *Metal Gear*-style night vision goggles in the small queue. Just 20-or-so regular punters huddled along a wall, and that was it. So much for me taking on the collective might of Japan's hardcore gamers. Where was the hustle and hysteria we'd come to expect from a big hardware launch in Japan? What would my editor say when I turned in a few boring snaps of an orderly queue? I needed drama.

More than a little hyper on the three cans of hi-caffeine coffee I'd necked on the train journey, I considered the implications of a little pushing and shoving – just for research purposes, you understand. I figured that if I pushed-in further up, and then tried to squeeze my way to the front, someone was bound to get shirty. With a bit of luck I might

start a small ruckus. Good for photos I reckoned.

Within seconds my head was swimming with images of a full-scale Tokyo street brawl; complete with rioting, looting and Sega president Shoichiro Irimajiri cowering behind a stack of Dreamcast boxes. I also envisaged a hapless English journo getting his head kicked in by some real-life Virtua Fighter experts — at which point I took a deep breath, and realised that I should cut down on my caffeine intake, not to mention SpikeOut sessions.

While waiting for the doors to open, excited Sega heads babbled about "Projek Berkree" (*Project Berkeley*, to give Sega's much-hyped adventure game its official moniker), and puzzled pedestrians slowed to

see what they were missing out on. Soon a shop assistant cloaked in a Dreamcast orange Hapi (a traditional Japanese festival jacket) announced through a loudhailer that "100 hundred machines would be made available." Yeah! Call FedEx! But then added that "Purchases would be restricted to one per person". Bugger. There goes my export empire.

Fortunately it wasn't long before my 60,000 Yen (around £330) was rung up on the till and I was walking away with a Dreamcast, VMS, arcade stick and, having snapped up the entire launch software line-up, four new games. Once I was home in front of the telly, however, it didn't take long to realise why so many copies of Godzilla Generations, Pen Pen and July were left on the shelves. As with PlayStation and Saturn, only one game mattered on launch day in Japan. The Saturn had Virtua Fighter, the PlayStation Ridge Racer and Virtua Fighter 3tb was the only reason anyone bought a Dreamcast.

Now call me a jaded old hack, but something's wrong here. Isn't a new console meant to provide new gaming experiences? Is Sega really committed to pushing back the boundaries of videogaming, or does it just want to keep recycling the same ideas? Okay, so VF3tb is a top notch conversion perhaps the best beat-'em-up out there, and certainly the most stunning in visuals terms. But essentially it's just a flashier, reengineered version of a five-yearold game. Apart from the weirdy new logo on the console, where exactly is the New Sega we've been promised?

Well it's early days. And let's not forget that in the Japanese market re-engineered games are a permanent fixture. Over in the west Dreamcast's debut will be far more inspiring, and let's hope it's boosted by titles employing the technology for more than just nice backgrounds. In the meantime though, I'm still wondering where the machine's must-have appeal lies for gamers looking to upgrade from N64s and PlayStations? Sonic Adventure certainly has a lot to prove. And, once again, Sega's fortune is depending on him.

■ In a past life, Jason was editor of Edge magazine. Now he spends his time in Japan and California.



THIS IS HARDCORE

Julian Rignall

Bubbles. God's gift to great gameplay.

he trouble with being a selfconfessed hardcore gamer is the image you've got to live up to. There's the look stars and stripes bandanna, a pallid complexion interspersed by eruptions of acne, mullet haircut, whatever might be your thing. Then there's the kind of games you're supposed to like - Quake, Street Fighter and obscure Japanese RPGs. A caffeinefuelled diet of maiming, dragon punches and hit points. I'll plead guilty to the games-half of the stereotype (I haven't had a mullet since Def Leppard bestrode the world of rock like a Colossus) with one proviso. I am in touch with the pink and fluffy side of my nature. Put simply, I've got a lot of time for cute. Particularly for the long and glorious career of one of gaming's greatest creations - Bub and Bob.

Ever since these two titchy dinosaurs turned up in the original Bubble Bobble with the words "Now it is beginning of a fantastic story! Let's make a journey to the cave of monsters! Good luck!", they've starred in some of the finest, most playable games ever made. What's more – and it's got to be said – they've got nowhere near the sort of credit they deserve, or would have got, if Nintendo or Sega rather than Taito had created them.

Of course, if you're new to gaming, you might not have come across their miniature reptilian brand of genius yet. The place to start is with any of the classic Bubble Bobble series - Bubble Bobble, Rainbow Islands and Parasol Stars. These 2D, ultra cute platformers have been around long enough to have appeared on the NES, Spectrum and C64, as well as the PlayStation and Saturn, taking in the likes of the ST, Amiga and Turbo Grafix 16 along the way. The basic idea - either trapping a succession of nonemore-cute baddies in bubbles and popping them or shooting rainbows or hitting purple pianos with umbrellas - might not sound

like much, but all three titles stand as one of the few retro gaming experiences that aren't a crushing disappointment when you return to play them again now.

The secret of Bub and Bob's success is easy to define, in that most misused of words gameplay. A factor that's been very much to the fore in the other half of their CV - the Puzzle Bobble games. Known outside of Japan as Bust-A-Move, these classics ditch the platforming elements for a surreal game of bubble-bursting puzzle perfection. Best played against a human opponent, you get a half a screen each, a launcher (a catapult like contraption) and an infinite supply of different-coloured bubbles. Shoot 'em at the ever descending mass of balloons at the top of the screen with the basic aim being to match three of the same colour so they pop. Again, it doesn't sound like one of gaming's greatest moments but I'd make a convincing case for Bust-A-Move being the new chess. Except it's not boring.

Underneath the whole colourful party vibe, the insanely dinky characters and plinky-plonky soundtrack, lies a game that's both frighteningly addictive and superbly strategic. Played against a fellow human, it's one of the best videogame experiences know to mankind and easily as competitive as Tekken or Virtua Fighter, but with none of the unseemly face punching. You soon learn to bounce your bubbles off the wall and hang strings of bubbles off ones you're going to pop to increase the deluge on the other side of the screen. Like in Tetris the only other puzzle game in the same super addictive league you'll be formulating complex strategies that hinge on the appearance of a single particularly bubble. Which never comes.

The great thing is, absolutely anyone can play it from the moment you put the pad in their hands. And that includes your dear old Mum. If gaming's ever going to break out of its self imposed ghetto and become just another form of entertainment that cuts right across the age and gender barrier, it'll be down to games like this. Bust A Move (and I recommend Bust A Move 2 on PlayStation, N64 and PC as the classic version) is simple, easy to understand and, something that often aets overlooked in these days of increasingly sophisticated machine specs and polygon counting, damn good fun to play.

So, whether you're a jaded old hack like myself, a hardcore game fan or someone who just got a PlayStation for Christmas, you owe it to yourself to sample some of Bub and Bob's magical gaming genius.

■ Julian is editor-in-chief of the Imagine Games Network (http://www.ign.com/). Where he writes about games.



BACKSCREEN

Neil Jackson

Sex, lies and videogames. All in a day's work.



veryone thinks that games get designed in seedy restaurants on

the backs of paper napkins. At tables surrounded by dancing-girls, and replete with plenty of booze and recreational nasal substances. Oh, I wish.

I admit I once did a deal in the *very* Chicago restaurant where the Blues Brothers asked "How much for your wife?" But I've been wined and dined in a Little Chef far more often than I've had hot dinners.

Despite the consistently disappointing normality of games design, very often the best concepts do come in a lightning flash of inspiration at three in the morning. It's a question of remembering, or writing it all down at the time, then reconsidering it in sobriety and the cold light of day. That's when it crystallises either into a potential million-dollar design document or so much extra toilet paper.

The gameplay is the key - it's like the character-play in a movie. Without it, your game is just a pointless sequence of images and sounds. Your players need to be entertained, stretched, pushed, tortured and rewarded: sometimes all at once. But they also need to be convinced it's worth going through that hell - that there's actually a point to their struggles, and that the journey is going to be fun. How you feed out the story and plot, and how you make any edge-of-the-seat action relevant, are at the core of a good design - far more so than a list of technical tricks and neat graphic effects. It's not just what the player is doing, it's why they're doing it - that's the important bit.

Forcing your player to suspend disbelief and buy into your concept is crucial, exactly as it is in all other forms of dramatic entertainment. To do this, players need to know (or need to think they know) what they should do, even if they don't exactly know how best to do it yet. They need to have the right "stakes" - the

stuff they'll lose if they fail. These stakes need to be pitched just right - they have to be worth having, but not so crucial that losing them dashes all hope. Losing a few points or a bags of gold (especially when they're about as hard to get as dodgy acid), is not fulfiling, taxing or even remotely "emotionally involving", as the marketing folk love to say.

And it's the marketing folk that you ultimately have to sell your game to, assuming you make it past the initial "meet producers, explain broad concept" meeting. You'll have to prepare a far more detailed presentation for the marketing team - and that team may have the final say as to whether your design is picked from many for production.

As you'd expect, this is the difficult part. Despite their closeness to the biz, many marketing teams don't appear to have the insight or the "gamer roots" to catch on to your big idea. This isn't really a criticism the marketeers know their part of the biz best, and sometimes they deliberately play dumb to see how well your idea sells itself. They need to know they have a reasonable chance at getting it across in a 20-second commercial or a magazine ad.

Armed with this background to the machinations of marketing types, the framework of a developer's sales job is almost done. A buzzphrase to remember is "unique selling points", or USPs - the things your game have that make it stand out from the crowd. A separate document with ten catchy phrases, each followed by ten short explanations, may be enough to give the marketeers an angle on your design - and you a chance of making it to the allimportant next meeting.

There's obviously a lot more to designing a game than having a few bright ideas and writing your sales pitch – but I'll leave that 'til next time. In the meantime, if you've got any guestions that you think everyone deserves an answer to, drop me a line at backscreen@techno.demon .co.uk and if I can, I'll answer them for you here.

■ Neil makes games for a living at Binary Asylum. His current project is Star Trek: **New Worlds.**



AMERICAN EXPRESS

Simon OX

American football. Those crazy yanks are Madden for it...



And that was soccer for me at school. Essentially something to be avoided at all costs until I was old enough to be sporty by watching it on telly, where there was no danger of anything knocking my front teeth out or kicking my shin in just the right place, crippling me enough to force me into goal. So it's a bit ironic that I'm now living in the most sport-obsessed nation on the planet - a fact reflected in the videogames market.

America is about nothing if not competition and videogames provide another avenue for beerswilling, Pringles-popping, burgermunching, telly-tubbies to actually win at something without breaking a sweat (unless you count those critical minutes that prelude the pizza delivery). Americans spend great wodges of cash on sports games every year and most of that money goes to Electronic Arts, erstwhile maker of FIFA and about ten other sports games series, designed primarily for the US market. The king of them all (and EA's top money spinner) is its John Madden/NFL American football franchise.

John Madden's name is the most valuable in the videogame sporting arena. Put his grinning

"everyone's uncle" mug on the front of the box and American gamers and, crucially, non-gamers, pony up the dough for what is, by most estimates, a pretty average gaming experience. Madden Football made its name back in 1990 when Sega's Mega Drive took off. Indeed, Sega executives will freely admit that without Uncle John paving the way, the Sonic phenomenon would've been far less, well... phenomenal. Since then the quality of the games has slipped, but that Madden name still keeps the profits churning in.

So what is it about this Madden bloke and his football game that seems to make for such huge appeal?

Madden himself was once an American Football star. In common with Jimmy Hill, he took up the art of commentary, and has become the Stateside voice of American Football. Unlike Jimmy Hill, though, everyone here likes him and no-one wants to (ahem) chin him. To millions of fans John Madden represents the Sunday afternoon ritual of watching football in front of the TV with your mates. He's old enough to know what he's talking about and macho enough to be worshipped by the likes of construction workers, cops and cowboys. He's acceptable - which makes the games, in turn, acceptable to a much wider audience than a sports game would normally find. Madden is the anti-geek.

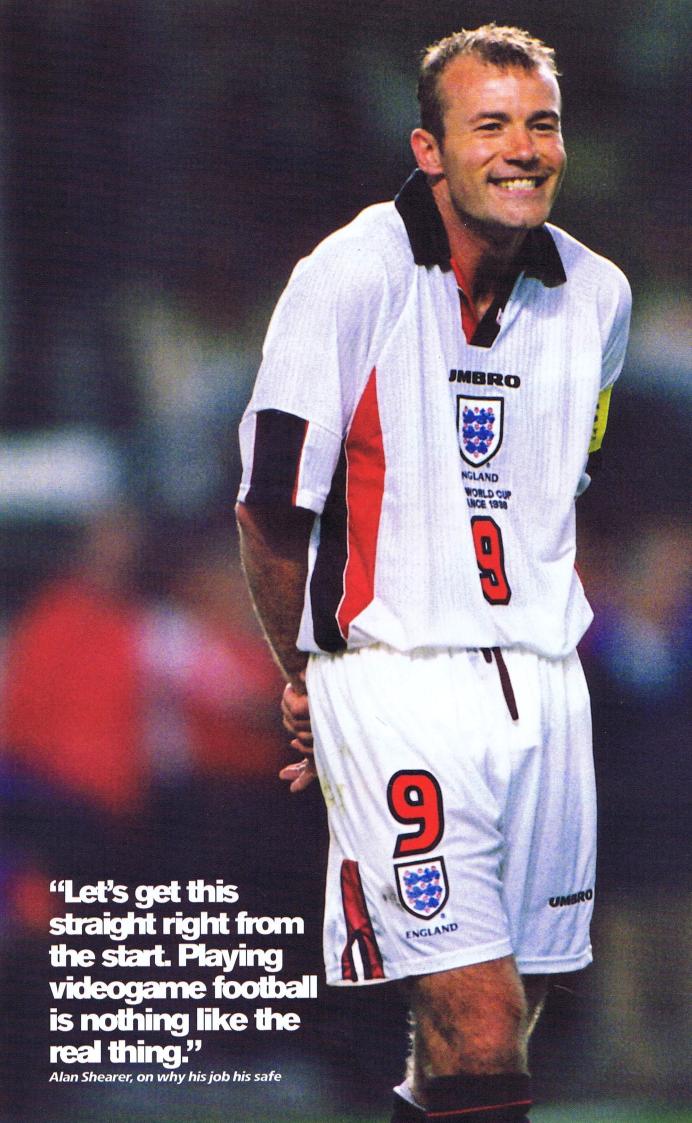
Electronic Arts has also been clever in its presentation. Instead of just coming up with a bunch of menus and buttons, it has worked hard to faithfully recreate the graphics seen on TV, including tons of video clips of old-man Madden and deceptively simple options. An idiot could play Madden without ever previously having played another videogame - and last year, over a million people in the US did. John Madden is sport - and sport is close to every American heart which is why it would never work in the UK. Would you buy a game purely on the basis of it having a picture of Jimmy Hill on the box? Precisely. Well, maybe if it was a beat-'em up...

■ Simon is executive editor of San Francisco's Next Generation magazine.



Virtual Fox





Interview by | Sam Richards

He may be a deadly predator on the pitch, but at home the England captain prefers a nice game of Croc with his kids. And there's nothing wrong with that



lan Shearer is the consummate striker. He scored a hat trick on his debut for Southampton, became the first player

to notch up 100 premiership goals while at Blackburn Rovers and then smashed through the UK transfer record moving to Newcastle United for £15 million. Now 28, Shearer is the England captain and is notable as being one of the most feared and respected footballers in the world.

But enough of the known facts, we've got more important questions to ask, like does Alan Shearer play videogames? If so, is he any good at them? And what are his reasons for endorsing Gremlin's Actua Soccer for PC and PlayStation?

We know about Alan Shearer the footballer, but what about Alan Shearer the videogame player? Do you live a secret life in front of the flickering screen?

I wouldn't say it's like that! But I do have a PlayStation at home and I do play Actua Soccer. It's my face on the box, so I'm proud to say it's a really good game.

What was it impressed you about the game when you first saw it?

Well let's get this straight from the start - playing videogame football is nothing like the real thing and can never hope to be. But people want to get as close to that experience as possible and the realism in football games these days allows them to do that. In Actua Soccer the grounds and kits are all accurate, you can choose different weather conditions and the tactics are the same as in the real sport, so that keeps you going, even before you start playing the game.

Do you fancy yourself as a bit of a demon on the virtual pitch?

To be honest, I'm still getting to grips with the new version of the game. I'm quite a slow learner and it's taken me ages to reach a decent standard on Actua Soccer 2 - now they go and bring a new one out! The kids, who are aged six and four, beat me all the time.

Do you become the competitive Dad, trying to emulate your kids' **PlayStation prowess?**

No, I think I get rid of all that on the pitch. Plus the kids are too good. I play against them in Buggy - the one with the radiocontrolled cars - and they usually win. They also like Croc. I think the PlayStation is a healthy thing, as long as they're not playing it every hour of the day.

You're a pretty keen golfer, so have you been attracted by any of the golf games around at the moment?

When I can get the kids off the machine, I find myself playing Actua Golf all the time. Although I haven't yet become addicted to the point where I'm staying up all night, I do hear Peter Alliss telling me I've gone into a bunker in my sleep.

When travelling with Newcastle and England, there must be loads of waiting around in hotels. Do games consoles make regular appearances?

Increasingly, yeah, you see them all the time. I don't always get involved myself, but there were a lot of videogames being played during the World Cup. David Batty's always up for a game, Rob Lee, Warren Barton, Keith Gillespie... when that lot get together, it's serious.

OK, so you approve of Actua Soccer. Like you say, your face is on the box. But what would you include if you were designing your own game?

I think that the games these days have got it cracked. But I suppose I would like to see more goals, and from a wider variety of shooting angles. The realistic management options are always a good idea, because everyone thinks they're a manager, don't they?

As realistic as videogames become, it's obviously impossible to recreate the pressure of expectation which players and managers deal with. How do you cope with the pressure?

I think you learn to value your position. We are being paid large amounts of money for doing something we love and there's not many people in the world who can say that. We're very fortunate, so there are pressures and expectations which we have to accept and respect. Although I do think it's wrong when a manager is sacked at the first sign of trouble. It's easy to blame the manager because he can be sacked and the

Oi ref!

■ When I met Alan Shearer, he was making gaming tournament to promote Actua Soccer 3. Thirty two journalists took part in the footy competition, held over BT's on-line gaming network, Wireplay. Your put in a sterling display in the yellow and green of Norwich City, but four points from three games was not guite enough to head to the second round.

Shearer himself didn't take part as he had to leave, probably to meet with another lucrative endorsee. However, competing alongside the hacks were two more footballers; Gus Hurdle, correspondent for Arcade's sister mag Total Football and turning out for Basingstoke in the Rymans League; and one of English football's brightest prospects, 20year-old Sunderland striker Michael Bridges.

In a fairy tale end game, the two real footballers beat off all other competition to face each other in the final - eventually won by Gus Hurdle (playing as France) 2-1. Michael Bridges evidently didn't let this defeat affect his real game – two days later he put away two goals in Sunderland's 4-0 demolition of Sheffield United.

players can't. Clubs should stick with their manager through good times and bad, at least until the end of a season.

Since the World Cup, the England set-up has suffered criticisms, some from within. What's your view?

As far I'm concerned, we simply haven't played well and if you perform poorly, you're going to get criticised. People are going to try to find all kinds of reasons for it, but if you don't play well, you don't play well. When things don't go right, you have to work extremely hard to make them right and that's what we're doing at the moment.

Will we qualify for Euro 2000?

I have no doubt about that. I honestly think we'll win all our remaining games and finish top of the group.

How has the responsibility of the England captaincy affected you?

Hopefully, it hasn't at all. I must have been doing something right in the first place to be given the job, so I've tried not to change my approach.

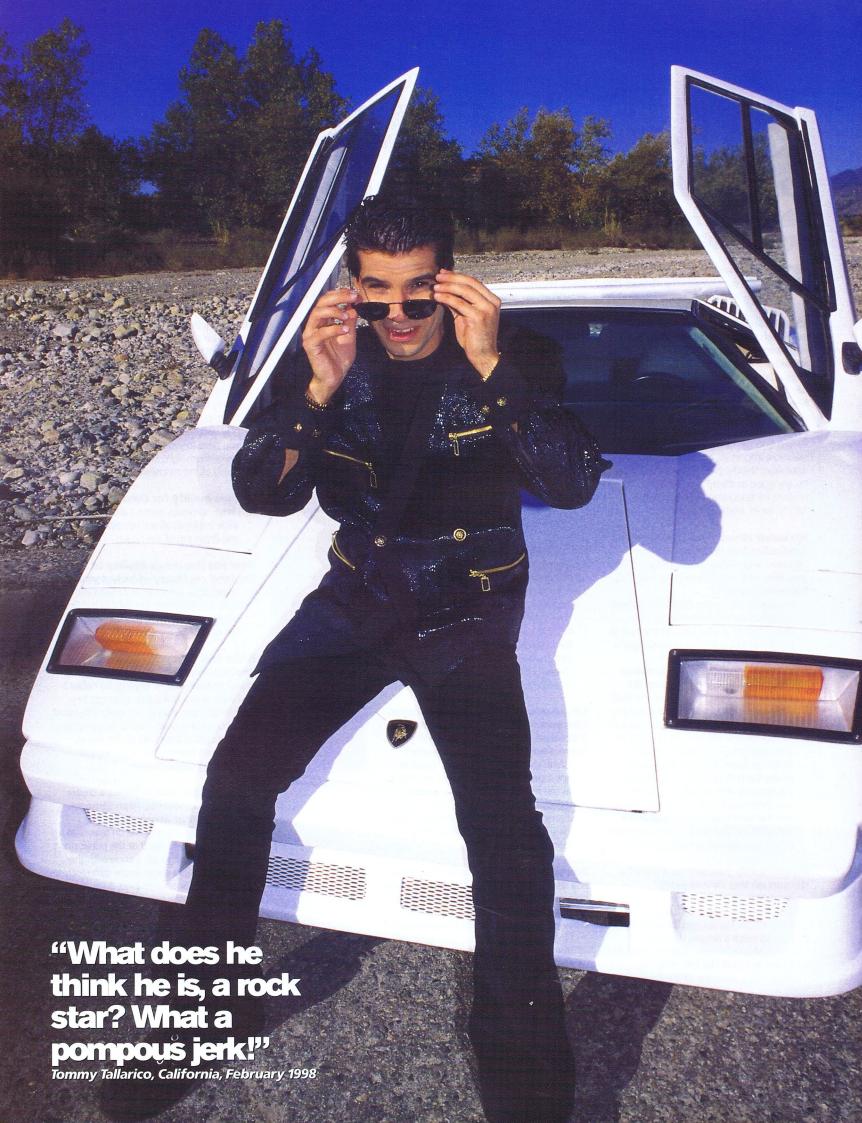
Is the fact that you're England captain always at the back of your mind when you're trying to relax?

I think about it like this - I've got two little girls and they're not really interested in how many goals I score, they're only interested in their Dad, so I'm always occupied trying of think of ways to entertain them.

Off the pitch, you've always been portrayed as Boring Alan Shearer. How does that affect you?

Well people only see me on television, so there's a side to me that the public don't know. When I go for a drink with the lads, I probably come across differently to how I appear on television. If I'm always asked the same questions, then I'm not going to have anything new to say! But I'll continue to do things my way - it hasn't done me much harm so far.

■ Gremlin Interactive's Actua Soccer 3 is on sale now.



CMMY alarco Interview by | Neil West

He's the world's most successful videogame musician. He lives in sunny southern California and earns over \$1 million a year. The bastard.

play in the background while you zap aliens, score winning goals or plot to take over the world. And he's very good at it. Having driven from Springfield, Massachusetts (that's one corner of the USA) to Hollywood, California (that's the other) at age 21, "to try and be a musician," he ended up selling keyboards in a store near Disneyland. On his first day he met a videogame producer from Virgin, talked his way into a job as a tester

e writes the songs. You

know, the ones that

Now he runs his own company, "Tommy Tallarico Studios, Inc", and is famous for attending videogame trade shows in a gold "Liberace" jacket with an attendant possé of bodyguards and scantily clad models. Let's try and find out why...

and started working his way up.

How many games have you written music for?

I actually have all of the boxes for every game I've ever done right here in my studio, so let me see... 104! Together, they've sold over 25 million copies.

What was your first?

My first score was for Prince of Persia on the Game Boy, but that was just a bunch of bleeps and blips. The first game I really got a chance to write music for that could sound cool was Virgin's Global Gladiators for the Genesis – that's the Sega Mega Drive in the UK, right?

What are you most proud of?

I would have to say the Earthworm Jim projects were my favourites. Creating and recording all of the crazy dialogue and sound effects was really fun. Working with the great David Perry also brings a positive spin on everything.

Where did you study music?

My teachers were Beethoven, Eddie Van Halen, Elvis - see, that's who I listen to. I never took lessons, never had formal training, I just play by ear.

Do you do just music, or sound effects too?

We do the whole package for sure! Creating the music is sometimes the easiest part. Creating the ambiance is what really draws the player into the game. You could have a great music score and crap sound effects and it will really ruin the experience.

So how do you work?

The best thing for me is to just play the game with no sound and wait for stuff to start coming to me. Then I go into my studio, which is upstairs, and figure out the notes on the keyboard that were dancing around in my head seconds before. Sometimes people come to me with a very complete style in mind, and say stuff like: "Can we have the rhythm section of The Prodigy, the sounds of The Chemical Brothers, the feel of Nine Inch Nails, oh yeah, and the guitar sound of Waylon Jennings?" Most of the time, though, they just give me the project and say: "Do what you think is best."

How much does in-game music affect a player's enjoyment?

I truly believe it is 25% of the gaming experience. Audio can set a mood, accent a motion and pretty much set the emotion for an level. I'll give you an example. You could have a scene where a character runs up to a huge cliff and slowly looks over it to reveal miles and miles of scenery. Depending on what the audio is doing, the player will react in different ways. If the music is haunting or scary, it may seem like you're getting chased or that you're going to fall. If the music's beautiful and epic it will give you a sense of awe and accomplishment.

What if the music's good ol' country and western?

Then you'll want to turn the game off and shoot yourself in the head.

What's with the gold jacket you wear to videogame shows?

OK, let's put this puppy to rest, 'cos there seems to be a lot of confusion about this. A lot of jealous, idiotic, knobscratching, Jawa-turd eating, tit-headed, wankers love to say: "Oh, what does he think he is, a rock-star or something? What a pompous jerk!"

The reality is that I was sick of walking around trade shows seeing only suits or badly dressed nerds. There was

Play that funky music

You probably own a game featuring the music of Mr Tallarico. His PlayStation credits include: Agile Warrior, Apocalypse, Beavis & Butthead Mini-Golf, Black Dawn, Burning Road, Covert Wars, Earthworm Jim 2, Felix the Cat, Golden Nugget, Hardball 99, James Bond: Tomorrow Never Dies, Major Damage, MDK, Messiah, NHL Face-Off 98, Pac-Man 3-D, Powerslave, Skeleton Warriors, Spot Goes To Hollywood, Stunt Copter, Tales of Destiny, Test Drive 4, Test Drive 5, Test Drive: Off-Road 2, Treasures of the Deep, VMX Racing, Wargames and Wild 9s

PC games featuring Tommy's tunes include: Adrenix, Agile Warrior, Akolyte, Beavis & Butthead, Duckman: Legend of the Fall, Earthworm Jim 1 and 2, Flying Tigers, Golden Nugget, Hardball 6, Hyper 3-D Pinball, MDK, Messiah, Monopoly Deluxe, Necessary Evil, Powerland, State Communication, Charles Tark Powerland, Char Shuttle, Test Drive 4, Test Drive 5, Ultra

Fighters and Wargames. Not even Saturn owners are safe with credits including: Black Dawn, Earthworm Jim 2, Golden Nugget, Hyper 3-D Pinball. Mortal Kombat Trilogy, Powerslave, Rampage, Skeleton Warriors, Spot Goes To Hollywood and VMX Racing. He's a busy man.

no personality, no shock-factor, no: "Oh my god! Did you see that?" Nobody knew who anybody was. Your favourite game could have been 7th Guest and you could have been standing right next to Graeme Divine or Rob Landeros and have no clue who they were.

So it's about being a personality?

I'd like to see more images and personalities from the videogames industry – like Hollywood. People go see movies just because of the actor. I believe gamers would like to know who created their favourite games and what their next project is going to be. I know I want to play the next game by the Metal Gear Solid team. But who are they? I dunno.

So the bodyguards and throng of scantily clad babes that accompany you in the gold jacket...

...they're there because I think I'm a rock star or something! Oh yeah, and I'm a pompous jerk!

How much do you get paid?

I hate it when people say: "no comment," so I'll tell you. Usually between \$75,000 and \$100,000 per project. If it's only sound effects, between \$15,000 and \$30,000. As far as music goes, I charge by the minute. It's usually around \$1,200 a minute. \$1,500 a minute for synched music and effects. I also keep part ownership, and must have the company logo displayed in as many obnoxious places as possible. Tommy Tallarico Studios, Inc is the largest multimedia post-production house on the planet and will hopefully remain that way until the fat little Italian plumber sings.

What's the secret of your success?

I'm a musician first, not a programmer, and I love playing videogames! The most discouraging thing is seeing people in the industry who don't play games - and trust me, there's a lot more than you would think. I can honestly say that out of about the 100-or-so musicians in the industry who do what I do, I'm the only hardcore gamer. I swear! It sucks, but it's true!





Game characters were born to suffer. But the best games hurt you as much as they hurt your on-screen pal. Scientific as always, we've measured the pain and compiled a chart. Prepare to wince, flinch and possibly cry.



50. An arrowing sight

■ Publisher: Acclaim

■ Is that a crossbow bolt sticking into the chest of that monkey from Turok 2? And, even worse, out the other side again?



49. Bum deal

■ Publisher: Konami

Ooh, this isn't what we want to see, particularly after a large cooked breakfast. Put it away, Mamezo out of Rakuga Kids.



48. Mined out

■ One wrong step and Abe's **Odyssey** is over – it's quite literally a minefield out there.



PLAYSTATION

47. Snow laughing matter

■ Publisher: SCEE

■ When a stunt goes right in **Cool** Boarders 2 it's a beautiful thing to behold. When it goes wrong, though, it's best to look away.



PLAYSTATION PC

46. Gone to pot 45. Farewell

■ Publisher: Gremlin

■ Even the most sporting player, the best of losers, will struggle to suppress a grimace upon being forced to watch his opponent clear the table in Pool Shark



PLAYSTATION

family jewels Publisher: BMG Interactive

■ It's enough to make you wonder why chaps' bikes (as featured in Courier Crisis) have crossbars and ladies' don't, rather than - as seems more logical - the other way round.



PLAYSTATION PC

NINTENDO 64

44. Leg go!

■ Publisher: GT Interactive

■ Being battered to death is bad enough. But being battered to death with the soggy end of your own ripped-off leg in Mortal Kombat 4 is frankly insulting.



43. Sweat, sweat, sweat

■ Publisher: Acclaim

■ None of **WWF Warzone** is rehearsed, you know. For a start, who'd agree to this particularly intimate hold by Goldust? Or even go within 100 yards of the Spandex-clad deviant?



42. Hole story

■ Publisher: Virgin

■ Does your tummy button look bigger than it used to? Then you may have fallen victim to Dr Dark's fist-mounted spikes in Street Fighter EX Alpha



41. Burns Night

Publisher: Acclaim

The curious thing about the flaming dragon punch in Street Fighter: The Movie is that it looks almost as painful for Ken as it does for Zangief.



40. Shocking truth

■ Publisher: Virgin

This moment from Star Gladiator looks almost pretty, doesn't it? But there'll be nothing pretty about the aftermath of the lightning bolt that June has just discharged into the midriff of, er... June.



39. Plane tiff

■ Publisher: Microsoft

■ What a super feeling it is to soar through the clouds in a Spitfire. courtesy of Microsoft Combat Flight Simulator! And how rotten to be ambushed by Jerry and sent plummeting like a stone to a messy encounter with Blighty.



PC

38. Selfflagellation

■ Publisher: Microids

■ Weapons don't come much more potent than Shogo's Bullgut. And pain doesn't get much more intense than accidentally firing off the Bullgut while standing too close to something. So don't do it.



37. Dinner-saur

■ Publisher: Acclaim

■ Here *Turok* is being swallowed whole by a tyrannosaurus rex. This hurts much more than being bitten by a rottweiler and vet. astonishingly, keeping a t-rex is not illegal in Britain.







PLAYSTATION

36. Came, sword, conked out

- Publisher: **SCEE**
- Equip every character in a game with a sword and it's clearly all going to end in tears. **Bushido Blade** is the kind of game that has the Blood Transfusion Service working double shifts.



NINTENDO 64 PC

35. Water way to go

- Publisher: Infogrames
- You know how in Tetris on the Game Boy, if the blocks reach to the top of the screen you screw up your eyes, hold the GB at arms' length and go "Gnnergh"? Suffering an earthquake in **Wetrix** is like that, only worse.



NINTENDO 64

34. A life cut short

- Publisher: Nintendo
- Yoshi's Story isn't the toughest of games, so losing a Yoshi is a rare occurrence. Which makes it all the more deeply affecting to see our fallen friend carried off by Koopa's dastardly men to their castle among the clouds. A quiver of the lower lip is perfectly acceptable on such occasions, along with a slight reddening of the eyes.



NINTENDO 64

29. Vertebral take-off

- Publisher: **GT Interactive**
- For a bit more good, old-fashioned sado-masochism we turn again to the *Mortal Kombat* series. Here, in number 4, Lui Kang has taken it upon himself to grab Tanya by the hair and plant his foot firmly in her back, snapping her spine like a cheese straw. Scarcely the act of a gentleman.



PLAYSTATION PC

28. Tarra Lara

- Publisher: **EIDOS**
- Oh, Lara. Why couldn't you have worn something a bit more sensible? A bullet-proof vest or something? Why did you have to listen to those marketing men? A Lycra bra's all very well for selling copies of *Tomb Raider*### Up to the companies of the proof of the



PC

27. Rancor file

- Publisher: Virgin
- In all the Star Wars games that've appeared over the years, nothing is more painful than having your head bitten off by the Rancor in Jedi Knight: Mysteries of the Sith. History could have turned out very differently if the same thing had happened to Luke in Return of the Jedi.



PC

26. V. bad

- Publisher: **Grolier Interactive Entertainment**
- Say what you like about David Braben, he knows how to make a ship explode. It's difficult not to wince as your **V2000** craft takes its final hit and smacks into the ground, instantly becoming a giant ball of flame and sending clods of earth flying dozens of feet into the air.



PLAYSTATION

21. Tummy ache

■ Publisher: SCEE

■ The beauty of **Tekken 2** is that you don't have to be a ponce to wince along with the characters as they duff each other up. Particular sympathy must here go to Jun, whose white socks aren't enough to save him from Paul Phoenix's fist to the stomach.



PC

20. Eight, nine, ten...

■ Publisher: **Empire**

■ While playing real-life golf is patently absurd, there's something soothing about its computer reproduction. A round of *The Golf Pro*, for example is most pleasant until your ball gets stuck in the rough. Then you can't even bend your club around the caddie's neck to relief the frustration.



PLAYSTATION

19. Wheel of ill fortune

- Publisher: **BMG Interactive**
- Just the word "sawmill" is enough to send shudders down the spine. But one of scariest of said wood-cutting installations is this one in Pandemonium, with those spinning teeth just as nasty as they look. Or possibly slightly nastier.



PLAYSTATION

18. Bye bike

- Publisher: Electronic Arts
- Ask any motorcyclist if he's ever fallen off and he'll spin you a gruesome saga of scabby knees, leathers torn right through to the skin and metal pins screwed into bone. Have pity, then, for this contender from *Road Rash*, who's about to leave a lengthy crimson streak along Her Majesty's highway.



NINTENDO 64

33. Vic's frying pan

■ Publisher: Atlas

■ It's probably supposed to be a giant golden coin, or something. But the wince-making noise that accompanies **Snowboard Kids'** squash-the-otherplayers power-up is exactly the same as the sound Vic's frying pan makes when he hits Bob over the head with it in **Shooting Stars**.



NINTENDO 64

32. Falling foul

■ Publisher: Nintendo

■ Can you feel a slimy, throbbing thing in your mouth? (No, not you, missus.) That'll be your heart, forced up and into your trachea as you crashed over the side of the track in F-Zero X and plunged tens of thousands of feet into lonely nothingness.



PC

31. Getting the third degree

■ Publisher: Sierra

■ So they knew how to build things in those days, did they? Not according to **Grand Prix Legends**. The slightest brush with another car and your driver's engulfed by a ball of flame. You can almost hear the plastic surgeons snapping on their latex gloves.



NINTENDO 64

30. Head case

■ Publisher: Nintendo/Rare

■ Stand still to admire the view in **Banjo-Kazooie** and you'll be treated to the gruesome spectacle of Banjo's feathered friend pecking him in the head. Judging by the resulting hollow sound, he's gone right through the fur and skin and is hammering away at exposed cranium. Ick.



PC

25. Toe sandwich

■ Publisher: **Sega**

■ When a game includes a character called Jeffry you hardly enter into it fearing for your life. But *Virtua*Fighter 2 is actually one of the most eye-watering games there is, particularly if your face happens to become involved in Jacky's roundhouse kick. And what if he just trod on something "squidgy"?



NINTENDO 64 PC

24. Four times the hurt

■ Publisher: Activision

■ When pain-transmitting joysticks finally appear in the shops, there's one "moment" that'll see them withdrawn from the shops immediately: the quaddamage gibbing from *Quake II*. Never has a power-up made you more grateful that games and real-life are — for the time being, at least — distinct.



PLAYSTATION PC

NINTENDO 64

23. Back ache

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive**

■ When the Mortal Kombat series moved into 3D for MK4, a whole new world of pain was opened up. How Midway motion-captured this one doesn't bear thinking about. But with a bit of luck it's missed any major organs and he'll be able to leap up and bite off someone's nose... or something.



PLAYSTATION

22. Bone o'fido

■ Publisher: Virgin

■ Here we've made, in every sense, a dog's breakfast of **Resident Evil 2**. In many ways these canine tormentors deal a more hurtful death than their zombie masters, gnawing on your fibulae as you lie there and watch.



NINTENDO 64

17. Singe along

■ Publisher: Nintendo

■ Lava has always had a detrimental effect on game characters. But Mario takes it worse than most. The highly flammable dungarees he wears in *Super Mario 64* mean that the slightest whiff of the stuff sends him rocketing thousands of feet into the air, clutching at his posterior and cursing vehemently (in Italian, thankfully).



PLAYSTATION

16. Shunt if I were you

■ Publisher: MicroProse

■ A couple of hours with *Ultimate Race Pro* and you can be sliding around corners with the rear tyres smoking and a grin on your face. Until, that is, you feel the back end sliding round to overtake the front and realise some cad – some *rotter* – has given you a nudge from behind. Bastards.



PLAYSTATION PC

15. That rex everything

Publisher: **EIDOS**

■ The dinosaurs died out 65 million years ago, but videogame players would be forgiven for thinking otherwise. Tyrannosaurus rex seems particularly reluctant to go quietly. Here he's about to sink his teeth into Sonja from **Deathtrap Dungeon** – without even letting her get dressed first.



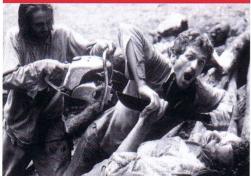
PLAYSTATION

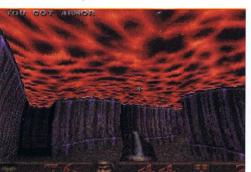
14. Pain beyond pain

■ Publisher: SCEE

■ Imagine having your tooth drilled without an anaesthetic, Marathon Man-style, while simultaneously listening to every entry from the 1985 Eurovision Song Contest, all played simultaneously on Matsui music centres. Incredible though it may seem, that's only a sixth as excruciating as this move from Battle Arena Toshinden







NINTENDO 64 PC

11. Hot bath ■ Publisher: Activision

■ Lava – as featured in Quake – seems to hold a singular fascination for those who make games. Graphic artists who normally have to stick to brown and grey can let rip with all the red and orange they've got. And sound effects men can compete with one another to create the perfect "AllIEEEE! ARRGHH! OOH-YAH!"



NINTENDO 64

8. Laying down arms Publisher: GT Interactive

Lose an arm in a threshing machine and you'll probably faint and wake up in hospital pumped so full of morphine you won't feel a thing. But Bullzeye here, in **Biofreaks**, allows himself no such luxury. Brushing off the blood squirting from his dangling artery he's continued his bout and won! We suspect he might go back to the changing rooms and cry, though.



NINTENDO 64

13. Teeth-clenching self-hate 12. Electro complex

■ Publisher: Rare

■ Finishing a level of **Blast Corps** takes meticulous planning, hyper-precise joystick control and nerves of titanium. So absolutely the last thing you want to do is accidentally crash your digger into the nuclear lorry you've been trying to protect for the last half an hour, instantly triggering an apocalyptic explosion that destroys half the free world.



NINTENDO 64

10. Crushing defeat

■ Publisher: Nintendo

■ It's the final lap of *Mario Kart 64*. Kong's out of the running after falling in the lava ages ago. Luigi's suffered red shell trouble all race. And Yoshi's struggling hard. You're home and dry. If, that is, you can just make it safely through this... room... full of... Thwomps... NOOOOO! Flat as a pancake and - NO! where did Luigi come from? And... gagh!



NINTENDO 64 PC

7. Own goal

■ Publisher: **Activision**

■ Getting a gibbing from your own grenade in Quake hurts on many levels. There's the obvious searing agony of shrapnel tearing through your body. But there's also the numb kind of pain you get in your stomach after being hoisted by a petard originally meant for another. And the discomfort of having to sheepishly restart, hoping no-one's noticed.



■ Publisher: Virgin

■ How we laughed as Jerry plugged Tom's tail into the mains socket and he leapt into the air, electricity flashing around his silhouetted skeleton. But it's true. That's what actually happens when you get electrocuted. The proof is here in Agent Armstrong, where our hero gets himself cattleprodded by one of the meaner agents.



NINTENDO 64

9. Fallen angel

■ Publisher: Nintendo

■ There's little in this world more fragile than Ibis (from **PilotWings 64**) suspended beneath a hangglider. Like a single strand of gossamer, she floats through the ether, batted this way and that by the slightest draught. Until, that is, you oafishly run out of airspeed and send her spiralling to earth, to land with an eye-watering crump.



6. Car-nage

■ Publisher: Nintendo/Rare

■ The dawn chorus had scarcely begun than you'd sprung out of bed and began to polish your Mondeo. A morning's bustle with a chamois and every panel was gleaming. Little did you imagine that a few hours later you'd be sandwiched between two Volvos, a Laguna and an Accord with your Turtle Waxed bumper scraping along the tarmac. Such is TOCA

5. Shock troops

- Publisher: Sierra Studios
- They're among the most disgusting creatures in videogaming, with their pointy fingers, their hunched backs and that creaky noise they make "Oooh, aaah, die!", it sounds like. Luckily a single shot to the head takes down these slimy Half-Life aliens, leaving their horrid webbed feet



flapping feebly in the air. A moment too slow, though, and their crackling electric attack makes the hairs stand up on the backs of your hands – and your health points disappear by the score.

PLAYSTATION PC

4. Patella terror

- Publisher: GT Interactive
- Ooh, no. Eurch. This one hurts just to write about. In fact, you're just going to have to look at the picture from *Mortal Kombat*
- 4, we're afraid. You'll have to imagine for yourself the tearing tendons, the snapping sinews, the crunching cartilage, the squirting synovial fluid. You'll



have to picture the protruding splinters of femur and shin, the flapping skin and the shredded calf. And you'll have to conjure up, without our help,

the accompanying sound – something akin to a bunch of celery being folded in half. Noob's dancing days are over, by the looks of it. Ugh.



PC

3. It's all your fault

- Publisher: Take 2 Interactive
- You hand-picked them from the finest straight-bred Americans: the elite of the elite of Tom Clancy's *Rainbow*Six. You constructed an assault plan so brilliant that your men first wept at its poetry then swarmed eagerly from the briefing room towards the occupied

embassy. You waited till all were perfectly positioned, and then gave the signal. You watched as your men sprung from their positions, launched their smoke grenades, and blundered straight into a room full of terrorists because you'd got confused on the tactics screen and put a waypoint in the wrong place. You witnessed the resulting bloodbath. You witness it again every night as you lie awake in bed, unable to sleep for the guilt.



PLAYSTATION PC

2. A drop too much

- Publisher: **EIDOS**
- We all have a strange relationship with Lara Croft. Be it sister, mother or secret lover, she's probably one of the strongest female role models in our lives. But although she'll soak up damage like a trooper, Lara does eventually reach her limit. Hurl her off a

high enough cliff in **Tomb Raider III** and, after a lengthy plummet, she'll smack into the ground and lie there in a crumpled heap, limbs bent hither and thither, looking more like a game of pick-up-sticks than an adventuress. It's not so much the pain – death will have been instant – as the shock of Lara's mortality. One moment she's leaping dynamically from ledge to ledge, so full of energy and vitality; the next she's cold and still.



NINTENDO 64

1. For your aggravation only

- Publisher: Nintendo/Rare
- Videogames can be terribly insensitive. "Mission failed!" they'll proclaim, almost smugly. "I know!" you'll cry. "I know I failed! I don't need to hear it from you! So what, like, if my dog died, you'd gleefully splash 'Your dog is dead!' across the screen? Have a heart! Just take me to the 'Retry/Exit' screen so I can have another go. And while I'm waiting, some flowers or something might be nice!" But no, it doesn't happen. Videogames are a cruel mistress, and failure is most often

met with cold indifference.

GoldenEye 007, though, has to go one step further. As your gallant Bond takes that final bullet, your body armour long expended, blood runs down the screen. "Ba-ba babaaaah!" goes the music. And then... And then it has to do it. It just can't resist switching to an out-of-body view and replaying your final moment of agony, the Spetznatz troops swarming around you, unloading their DD44s into your prone corpse.

And then, like that wasn't enough salt rubbed into your already smarting wounds, it replays it again. And again. And, as your thumb fumbles for the Start button, again.

SEGNS THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW





DREAMCAST IS SEGA'S BRAND NEW VIDEOGAME CONSO WILL ARRIVE IN THE UK THIS AUTUMN. YOU'VE ASKE OTS OF QUESTIONS ABOUT IT. TIME FOR SOME ANSWERS

WHAT IS DREAMCAST?

Dreamcast is a new videogame console from Sega. You remember Sega - the giant Japanese games company that brought you the Mega Drive and Sonic the Hedgehog back in the early '90s. Since then, Sega's seen its business go decidedly pear-shaped. After the unfortunate unpleasantness of the Mega CD and 32X (two illadvised Mega Drive add-ons), it released Saturn, a console designed to compete head-to-head with Sony's PlayStation. As it turned out, Saturn was under-powered and didn't boast the "must have" games, such as Ridge Racer and Tekken, that

Let's start at the beginning.

PlayStation had. It was a doomed console from the get-go - it quickly floundered and very soon croaked. Even Nintendo 64. despite launching two years after Saturn, quickly overtook Sega's meagre sales total and stole the number two spot with barely a backward glance.

But now Sega's back and it's looking to take revenge. The company's Dreamcast is designed to lure videogamers away from PlayStation and back to Sega. How? By offering "next generation" videogame technology that provides richer graphics, sharper sound, and a more luscious gaming experience than anything else on the market. Essentially, Sega wants Dreamcast to do to PlayStation what PlayStation did to Saturn.

Dreamcast first went on sale in Japan on 27 November, priced at ¥29,800 (£150). Head to page 16 for the full story, then come back here.

SO IS DREAMCAST ANY GOOD?

There's no denying that Dreamcast is a sexy box of state-of-the-art videogame trickery. Computer technology is constantly improving and so, much in the same way that a Walkman today does more and yet costs less than a Walkman bought a few years ago. Sega has been able to cram Dreamcast full of chips and components that simply weren't available when Sony put PlayStation together.

Under the hood of Dreamcast you'll find a 128bit RISC Hitachi SH-4 200MHz CPU, dedicated PowerVR graphics processors from VideoLogic, a Yamaha 32-bit RISC 64-channel sound chip. 16Mb of RAM, a 12-speed CD-ROM drive and an entire Tomorrow's World episode of chips and processors. Sega has collaborated with Microsoft to equip Dreamcast with a Windows CE-based operating system. When coupled with all the VideoLogic graphics technology, this means that Dreamcast's innards bear more than a passing resemblance to a top-of-the-line PC

In the end, though, a razor's only as good as the shave that you get from it - and the real test of Dreamcast is a play of its games.

WHAT DREAMCAST GAMES ARE THERE?

Dreamcast launched with just four titles. As with most new system launches. this first group of games is a strange mix of the good, the bad and the downright ugly. Each game is reviewed in this issue, starting on page 132, but here's the briefest of brief low-downs: Virtua Fighter 3tb is great - a fine conversion of a fine coin-op: Godzilla Generations looks amazing and is amusing in a "Look at me!" kind of a way for the first half hour or so: Pen Pen Tricelon is weird. but no weirder than a lot of other things you and three of your closest pals could be doing huddled together in a darkened room; and finally July is impenetrable - it's an avant-garde, text-based adventure game. In Japanese.

Then there's Sonic Adventure, the game that Sega hopes will do for Dreamcast what Super Mario 64 did for Nintendo 64. It was released on 23 December and you can find out more about it on page 53. As this part of Arcade goes to press. we're expecting a Federal Express package from Japan with a finished version of Sonic Adventure. If it gets here on time, you'll find a review on page 136. If not, you'll have to wait until next month.

WHAT DREAMCAST GAMES ARE COMING **OUT IN THE FUTURE?**

For a more complete round-up of upcoming Dreamcast releases, check out page 52. It's a mixed bag, to be honest, but then the first load of games released for a new console always is. The problem is that early in a system's life, the audience for games isn't very big. This means that publishers are unwilling to commit huge amounts of money to making a game that can, at best, only sell to a small number of people. It's hard for them to make money.

What you end up with is a hodge-podge of games from new developers looking to make a name for themselves, some half-arsed efforts from more established publishers fulfiling obscure contractual obligations, "trial runs" from people who want to know more about working with a system before they port their big-name hits to it. and games originally designed for other systems converted at the last minute. It's all a bit random.

Some Dreamcast games will be great. Many will be crap. Big names to look out for over the next six months or so include Incoming from Rage (a shoot-em-up), Biohazard: Code Veronica





WHAT'S WITH DREAMCAST'S FUNNY JOYPAD?

The Dreamcast controller is straightdown-the-middle conventional. Boasting both a Nintendo 64-style analogue stick and a traditional digital D-pad, four face-mounted buttons, and two shoulder "trigger" buttons, it's essentially the same as a PlayStation Dual Shock pad (without the extra

rumbling - though a vibrating add-on is on its way). What separates Dreamcast's pad from the herd, however, is the kit you can plug into it. There are two ports at the top of the pad, into which you can stick Sega's VMS (Visual Memory System) and all manner of bits.

One other thing: first pick up a Dreamcast pad and you'll notice that it's very small. But then it's designed for the Japanese market where gamers tend to have smaller hands. Sega's Saturn launched in Japan with a similarly tiny controller. Sega then made a bigger, chunkier version to accompany the UK release. The same upgrade is likely to happen this time around.

from Capcom (a re-working of *Resident Evil*). Sega Rally 2 and Virtual On from Sega itself. and Monaco Racing Sim from Ubisoft.

WILL ALL THE BIG-NAME PUBLISHERS AND DEVELOPERS MAKE GAMES FOR DREAMCAST?

This is the \$6 million question. And it's this question that you can bet is keeping Sega's board of directors awake at night. It's all about building up enough momentum – gamers will only buy Dreamcast if enough big-name publishers release games for it: the big-name publishers will only release games for it if there's a big enough audience. It's

a nasty *Catch 22* situation that every hardware manufacturer is unhappily familiar with.

Right now, Acclaim, GT. Midway and Interplay are the big guns who have openly announced that they will support Dreamcast. Most of the others – EA, EIDOS, Activision, and so on – are taking a "wait and see" position.

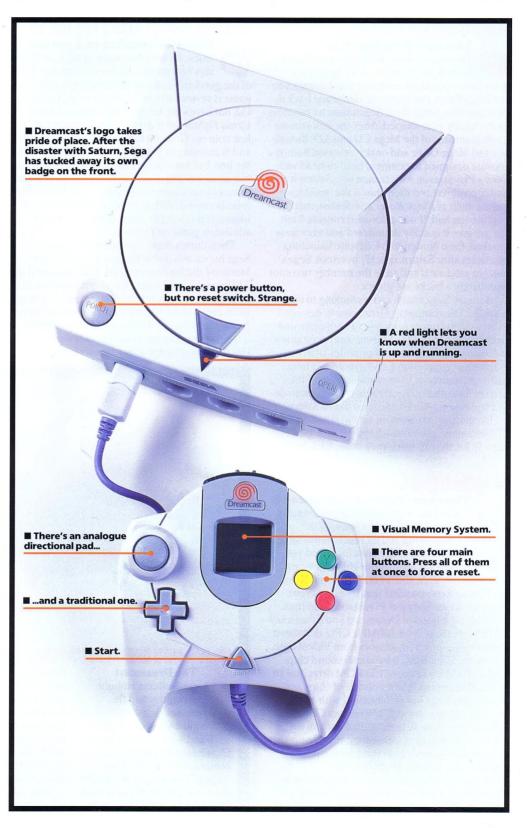
IS DREAMCAST BETTER THAN MY Playstation?

Yes. Technically, Dreamcast is a superior system to PlayStation. You used to be able to gauge a console's strength by the muscle of its CPU (the NES and Master System boasted 8-bit CPUs, the PlayStation and

Saturn have 32-bit CPUs. Nintendo 64 has a 64-bit CPU, and so on). But today's consoles feature so many add-ons that this method of evaluation is a bit like judging cars purely by their engine size – and which offers better performance, a 1.8 litre 16 valve turbo-charged GTi or a 3 litre Mini-van?

There's no real hard rules for comparing the computational power of consoles, but "polygons per second" is as near as the industry's come to a benchmark test. Why? Because now most games feature 3D worlds, and polygons are the building blocks from which these 3D worlds are made. It's logical to say that the more polygons a console is able to draw per second, the more detailed its graphics will look and hence the "better" the console is. "When we decided to make Dreamcast





the most important factor was to display as many polygons as possible," says Sega Enterprises' Hideki Sato, "especially after the criticism of the Saturn compared to the PlayStation in this area".

Sega claims that Dreamcast can generate four million p/s (polygons per second). PlayStation clocks up a meagre 360.000p/s. Do the maths.

The long answer, though, is that the best console is the one that you have most fun playing with - it's all about the *games*. Think about it. If. right now, you had to choose between a 3DO or a SNES, which would it be? In other words "better" is a relative term and a subjective opinion. And don't let any marketing hype kid you otherwise.

IS DREAMCAST BETTER THAN MY NINTENDO 647

Same as with PlayStation - it's all down to the games that you want to play. For what it's worth, though, Nintendo 64 has been clocked at roughly 400,000p/s.

IS DREAMCAST BETTER THAN MY TOP-OF-THE-RANGE PC?

Dreamcast is very similar to a top-ofthe-range PC and, in terms of delivering great gaming experience, is in some ways far ahead. The Hitachi CPU not only runs faster than a Pentium 2 but has been designed with games in mind. The CPU in a traditional PC has to be able to turn its hand to all kinds of things (word processing, downloading Internet porn and so on). Dreamcast's innards, however, are focused purely on the fast mathematics needed to shift around real-time 3D graphics. It's this streamlining that has enabled Sega to release a machine that out-performs a PC for such a low price. Try asking it to run a spreadsheet, and you'll see where Sega's cut corners.

WHY ISN'T DREAMCAST OFFICIALLY **AVAILABLE IN THE UK?**

New consoles generally launch around the world at different times. This is for three main reasons. First, launching a new games machine is a big deal. No. really, it's a huge undertaking. And so companies tend to chop the job into three separate chunks and stage staggered launches in Japan, Europe and the US. This way they get to focus on just one area at a time and learn from previous mistakes.

Second, different markets are ready for new consoles at different times. Japan is generally ahead of the curve as far as videogames are concerned, and so is more welcoming of a new system long before the UK is ready.

Third, you can't just ring up a bloke who owns a factory and say "Hello, Sega here. We need three million Dreamcasts by Friday week". Production of any hardware has to be ramped up slowly and gently. Manufacturing your console is dependent on all sorts of outside factors beyond your control. It's a bit like trying to organise a party when you're depending on all your mates to bring booze and food and that video of the World Cup and those decks and that lighting rig and those girls you met at the pub last week... and the risk is that all you'll end up with is your little sister and eight packets of Twiglets.

As it is. Sega hasn't even been able to make enough Dreamcasts for Japan's launch. It had hoped to make and sell 500,000 over the first couple of days but, due to a shortage of PowerVR 2DC chips from NEC. it was only able to get

150,000 machines out on the shelves. Another 350,000 reached shops before the New Year and sold out, but it wasn't the start Sega hoped for.

SO WHEN'S THE OFFICIAL UK **LAUNCH DATE?**

Sega's planning to launch Dreamcast in the UK "late this year". Smart money is on a September launch, giving Sega plenty of time to work up a good head of steam for the all-important Christmas spending spree.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

Sega has made no announcement on price. Right from the start, it's maintained that Dreamcast will be "affordable". How this will translate to a price at your local Dixons remains to be seen. Our guess is £199 at launch, dropping quickly to £149 nearer Christmas.

BUT I WANT ONE NOW!

Okay, Okay - then you can buy one on import (a machine designed and built for the Japanese market, but imported by a UK dealer for re-sale in the UK). Whenever a console is launched in one country before another, it always gives rise to a bustling "grey market (so called because it's not strictly lawful, but then it's not illegal either). There are plenty of places willing to charge you an arm and a leg for an imported Dreamcast. If you don't have a local dealer, try Games Exchange on 0171 916 8440.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I PAY FOR AN MPORTED DREAMCAST?



Due to shortages of Dreamcasts in Japan, it's taken a while for the number of Dreamcasts imported to the UK to meet

demand. On the day after Dreamcast's launch. London's Computer Exchange on the Tottenham Court Road had managed to grab only four machines, and quickly put them on sale for £2,000 each. "It's a joke price really," the shop's David Kestler told trade paper MCV, "we've got so few we wanted to be sure we could keep them on display." Still, Arcade knows of someone who turned down offers in excess of £1,500 for his machine the day after launch.

Now that things have calmed down, Arcade recommends paying no more than £400 for a Dreamcast with the leads, two joypads, a stepdown transformer and Virtua Fighter and Sonic Adventure. The other games - if you really want them - shouldn't cost you more than £60 each. But phone round for prices - they will drop.

F I BUY A DREAMCAST ON IMPORT, WHAT HOULD I BEAR IN MIND?

The obvious advantage of buying on import is that you get sexy new kit before it's officially available in the shops. Additionally, because Japanese systems are designed to run on NTSC televisions (in the UK we use the PAL standard), an imported system used in the UK will run 20% faster than a homegrown one (it's all down to different screen update rates). You'll also get a better picture quality by using a SCART connection, instead of a composite lead, in your aerial socket.

Buying an import isn't without its headaches and potential pitfalls, however. If you buy from a reputable dealer, then you should be okay. But here's a checklist of things to bear in mind: a) Different countries have different mains electricity ratings. You'll need a step-down transformer to play a Dreamcast in the UK. Plug in your imported machine into 240-volts without one and it's going to start smoking. b) Due to the different TV systems from country





WHAT'S THAT LITTLE GAME BOY THING?

Sega's VMS (Visual Memory System) is perhaps Dreamcast's biggest innovation. It's a tiny games system in its own right with a D-pad, four buttons and a 48 x 32 pixel screen. When it works as a standalone system it does so in a very low-powered. not-even-as-advanced-as-a-Game Boy kind of way, but it's also part of Dreamcast's joypad.

When used independently. it uses code downloaded from a

"proper" Dreamcast game. Godzilla Generations. for example, offers a Tamagotchi/ Pocket Monsters type of subgame in which you get the chance to create your own monster to battle Godzilla. We haven't had much luck with it yet (Godzilla always manages to kick our ass), but there's plenty of potential for fun here.

When used as an integral part of the joypad, the VMS screen displays a range of

game information pertinent to the individual player. So far, the Dreamcast games available only scratch the surface of the VMS's potential. In Pen Pen Tricelon, for example, you just get a full screen portrait of your game character. In Virtua Fighter 3tb you get nothing at all. This is a shame. But as game designers spend more time thinking about the VMS's potential, we're quite sure that they'll make more of it.

to country, you'll need an NTSC-compatible TV to play a Japanese Dreamcast in the UK. c) Any warranty that Sega may offer becomes invalid the moment the Dreamcast leaves Japan. If your new console goes wrong, you'll have no joy ringing up Sega Europe and whining. They have no obligation to help you. So check carefully what, if any, warranty the dealer who sells you the machine offers. This is especially important with spanking new machines such as Dreamcast, because the first few batches of any brand new electronics device can be buggy and are liable to break down for no obvious reason.

d) When Dreamcast is finally released in the UK. in all probability it will incorporate some kind of lock out device to prevent people from playing Japanese or American Dreamcast titles on it. A knock-on of this is that your Japanese machine won't play UK Dreamcast games – you'll have to keep buying expensive imports. Usually this lock-out can be bypassed with some kind of extra peripheral or surreptitious wire-snipping, but this will mean extra expense and/or hassle. e) You'll be paying over the odds. But then you already knew that...

WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT A DREAMCAST MODEM?

In Japan, Dreamcast launched with a modem to enable users to access a special on-line Dreamcast site. Despite the obvious potential of this feature (multi-player games, chat rooms and so on), it's unlikely that the UK machine will incorporate it. Sega Europe perceives it as "too techie" and local phone calls are too expensive to make UK modem-gaming a mass-market proposition just yet.

WHAT DOES SONY SAY ABOUT DREAMCAST?

Sony has done a fairly good job of pretending to ignore Dreamcast. Chris Deering, the CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment, Europe, has confined his criticism of Sega's new machine to warning the more profit-minded games developers to stay away from it. "Developers who work on ports to Dreamcast should take out their calculators," he says. "PlayStation is very rapidly approaching a 50 million installed base, [and so] a title that sells an average amount on PlayStation will make more money than a hit on Dreamcast." In other words, according to Deering, developers should continue making games for Sony. Deering's conclusion? "It's unrealistic to believe that Dreamcast can catch up with [PlayStation's] kind of momentum for a long, long time."

WHAT DOES NINTENDO SAY?

Nintendo of America's President,
Howard Lincoln warns gamers not to mistake hype for the real thing. "New videogame systems are always of great interest to the media and to the hardcore gamers who follow this industry closely" he says. "But for the mass majority of people it's all really a matter of games that are here and now. Dreamcast's success will be dependent on the quality of software Sega can come up with."

He also goes on to point out that just because Dreamcast's here, it doesn't mean that Nintendo 64 is over the hill. "The lifecycle of Nintendo 64 will be longer than most people think," says Lincoln, "and there are still a lot of things that can

be done technically on N64 that haven't been done. When you see games like *Zelda* and *Perfect Dark* [it will give gamers] an indication that there's still a lot of room for growth."

CAN I TRUST SEGA?

Ooh, good question. Sega came from nowhere with the Mega Drive and impressed everyone with its hardware, games and fresh attitude. But as the party started to end, it was gamers who were left to pick up the tab. Many Mega Drive owners forked out for a Mega CD or 32X and found themselves with expensive, under-powered failures. Then came Saturn and a whole new nightmare of bad games and unfulfilled promises. Basically, over the last few years the Sega name has been somewhat comprehensively dragged through the mud.

So why should anyone trust Sega this time around? Shoichiro Irimajiri. President of Sega Enterprises in Japan, offers a few words: "When we went into the Saturn project, the culture of Sega was formed mainly by the arcade business. We were not ready to go to the consumer market, and that resulted in a terrible experience." he admits. "Now we have learned from our mistakes and we are ready." And his overall conclusion? "Dreamcast is 20 or 30-times more powerful than Saturn, so it's clear that the machine is very different. But the biggest difference is not the technology but our mindset."

Certainly there's been a big re-shuffling of Sega's key management in all major territories, but whether or not this new mindset is real or imagined, only time will tell.

WHAT ABOUT PLAYSTATION 2?



No one here at Arcade doubts that PlayStation 2 will be far more powerful than Dreamcast. Sony's technology

■ General settings include language and time.

experts are smarter. Sony's in-house pool of resources is bigger. Sony's manufacturing muscles are, well, beefier. PlayStation 2 is also a year or two "newer" than Dreamcast – and hence will be able to use more efficient and powerful components. And in a head-to-head fight with Dreamcast, we have no doubt that Sony's new machine (even though we haven't seen it yet) would emerge victorious.

But what might save Sega is Sony's reluctance to let PlayStation 2 join the fight.

Ironically, it could well be the phenomenal success of PlayStation that gives Dreamcast its chance. Why? Because the original PlayStation is doing so well – and continuing to do well for longer than anyone anticipated – that Sony simply can't afford to replace it. It would be killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. For some while it's been assumed that PlayStation 2 would launch late this year. Now it wouldn't be at all surprising if Sony decided to give the original PlayStation another year in the limelight and put its successor back a year to 2000 – and give Dreamcast an extra year of breathing room.

SO SHOULD I START SAVING?

It's simply too early to tell. How

Dreamcast does in Japan over the next nine-months-or-so prior to the UK launch will give us the best indication as to whether or not it will be a "must buy" or whether you'll be better off just sticking with your PlayStation or Nintendo 64. In the end, it's all down to the new games – if developers manage to squeeze enough "must play" experiences out of Sega's new kit, then the sky's the limit. If the world's premiere games-making talent ignores it in favour of the lucrative existing markets, then Dreamcast will become just another gaming backwater. We'll wait and see. For the moment, though, your existing console is by far the best option.



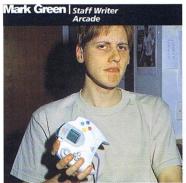
Like PlayStation, Dreamcast is a CD-based machine. So it comes with all kinds of extra features. It will play music CDs straight out of the box, but a quick flick through all of the options available will soon have you itching to buy extra memory cards, joypads and spare VMS units – just to see what your new machine does with them.



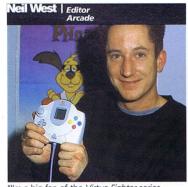


'What do you think of it so far?"

Arcade shares an office with many other computer and videogame magazines - so there are a lot of videogame experts hanging around. We asked them to give us their first impressions of Sega's new machine.



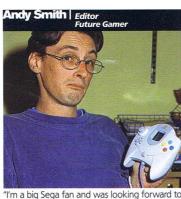
The first thing that hit me was how small it was. And white. After that, there was crushing disappointment at the rubbishness of the games. Virtua Fighter 3 is okay, and Pen Pen is funny, but Sega will have to do a lot better to get a Dreamcast into my living room."



"I'm a big fan of the Virtua Fighter series always have been - so for VF3tb alone I give Dreamcast a thumbs up. Godzilla and Pen Pen are like the people you meet on your first day at college - you try hard to like them, but in a few months you'll have moved on."



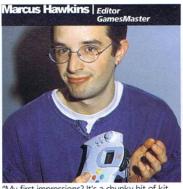
u can tell that Sega's trying to distance Dreamcast from the company's troublesome past - the Sega logo is tiny! I think the games look better than anything else I've seen, but four hundred guid for an import system? That's too much. I'll wait until the price comes down."



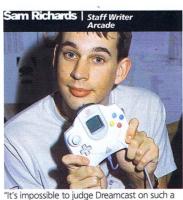
"I'm a big Sega fan and was looking forward to Dreamcast. I'm not disappointed, but I'm not blown away either. Virtua Fighter is great. I played Pen Pen Tricelon for about a minute and had no idea what I was doing. I'm going to sit on the fence until I've played some more."



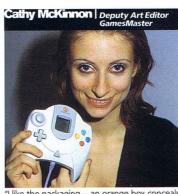
"It looks like a Breville Pie Magic and - Virtua Fighter 3tb excepted - has the worst launch line-up since the Spectrum, but there's no denying it's potential. Even Godzilla points to some power under Dreamcast's bonnet. With luck Sonic and others will lead the way..."



"My first impressions? It's a chunky bit of kit. But where's the reset button? Virtua Fighter 3's a sumptuous looking arcade heavyweight but Sega needs Sonic Adventure and Sega Rally 2 to make a real impact. I reckon Dreamcast will be a slow grower. I'll look again in six months.



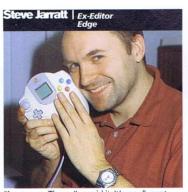
small and unusual range of games. I think Pen Pen is the best - at least in terms of showing off Dreamcast's graphics. It's not a massive leap forward from PlayStation or N64, though. Sonic will be the true test of Dreamcast's calibre."



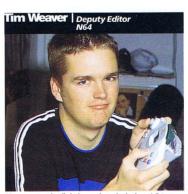
"I like the packaging - an orange box conceals the white and surprisingly small console. It feels good and solid, too. I enjoyed playing Pen Pen, although it took me a while to adjust to the new controllers. But until I have a proper go at Sonic Adventure I don't want to buy one.'



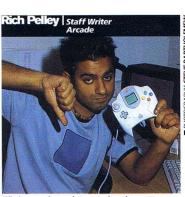
Three games do not a successful console make. Especially not these three. Virtua Fighter is near arcade-perfect, but the hulking Godzilla and the twee weirdness of Pen Pen set an alarmingly early precedent of mediocrity. Early days, perhaps; but hugely disappointing so far."



"Awesome. There, I've said it. It's small, neat, well designed, solid and supremely powerful. Even third-rate stuff like Godzilla demonstrates the pixel-shifting prowess of the machine. Sega has delivered on its hardware promise; now it's up to the software engineers.



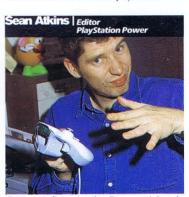
"Dreamcast is slightly underwhelming. Virtua Fighter 3 is solid and playable but, at its best is only Tekken 3's equal. Godzilla turns out to be a pitiful rendition of the N64's Blast Corps. The difference between Pen Pen and a hi-res Turok 2 is negligible. I'm not impressed, I'm afraid."



"I'll always raise an interested eyebrow at a new console, saving a second eyebrow to raise or scowl once it's had the once-over. The first thing I noticed about Dreamcast is how heavy it is. I like the logo, too. Clever stuff. Don't think much of the games, though. Sorry."



'Godzilla's a turkey but gives a hint of what Dreamcast can deliver. VF3tb is pretty tight so that's another reason to be cheerful. And even though it's nothing like when Mario 64 hit us, as long as the games keep coming I think there's reason to be cautiously optimistic.'



"Everyone's forgetting that Dreamcast's launch lime-up is designed for the Japanese market and Japanese gamers love Virtua Fighter. Personally, I'm waiting for Sega Rally 2. Then I'll wait and see what games Sega comes up with for its European Dreamcast debut."



"I can't find it in myself to criticise the orange be-squiggled one just yet - it's just to soon to tell. What we've seen are very early games, and there's still a great deal left that inspired developers can do to squeeze more impressive performance out of future offerings."



sixteer

Every new games machine needs some new games - and some old favourites – for you to stick in it. The following 16 titles are Arcade's pick of Dreamcast's future release schedule, and offer the best hope of realising the machine's potential.



Sega Rally 2

■ Developer: Sega ■ In a nutshell: direct conversion of the arcade favourite. The original Sega Rally was one of the flagship games of Dreamcast's predecessor (the Saturn), and still plays as one of the best home racing games this side of *Gran Turismo* on the PlayStation Expect the Dreamcast to do things even better.

■ Watch out for: split-screen mode and a whopping 40 courses.



EGG

■ Developer: Hudson

In a nutshell: Elemental Gimmick Gear (to give it its full name) is an action-RPG using real actors. It's set in the city of Fogna where, because of a natural disaster, the people are trying to rebuild their lives and culture. Most of the game is hand-drawn 2D, but it switches to 3D when you face any of the bosses.

■ Watch out for: plenty of typically quirky



Evolution

Developer: SegaIn a nutshell: 3D graphic adventure, with multiple-choice question and answer sessions, a heavy plot, plenty of *Final Fantasy VII*-style battles, and characters with that boast interesting names, such as Mag Launcher.

■ Watch out for: outlandish in-game headgear,



Power Stone

Developer: Capcom

■ In a nutshell: True 3D fighting game, with a cast of eight hugely varied characters. On-screen objects, such as crates and park benches, can be picked up and hurled; beams and roof tops can be climbed on to; and some impressive weapons – including bazookas and flame throwers – can be picked up

during the course of the game.

Watch out for: enormous crushers and breakable shop windows



Tyo Golf

■ Developer: **Sega**■ **In a nutshell:** details are sparse, but *Tyo Golf* looks like it's going to combine large, manga-style graphics with the more traditional aspects of other golf games. Quite what it is that makes Japanese golf courses look different remains a mystery.

Watch out for: big-eyed babes



SpikeOut

Developer: Sega

■ In a nutshell: unlike most other beat-'em-ups SpikeOut places new emphasis on co-operation between players. Not only must you focus on fighting for yourself, but you must also keep a constant eye on your partner. You can go into buildings, up fire escapes and down into sewers while you fight.

■ Watch out for: 40 playing areas, 12 characters, and a selection of knife, crowbar and baseball batbearing combatants.



Incoming

■ Developer: Rage

■ In a nutshell: PC-originated old-skool shoot-'em-up where you get to commandeer practically every form of military transport under the sun; from F1 planes, to helicopters, to ground-based anti-aircraft guns. The PC version was a visual banquet, and the Dreamcast version looks like it's going to be better.

■ Watch out for: itchy trigger fingers.



Blue Stinger

Developer: ClimaxIn a nutshell: action adventure with Jurassic Park tendencies. Set on a secret island off the Yucatan Peninsula, government forces have built a city and begun a huge research program, but then everyone mysteriously disappears. You guide a group round the island to find out what's going on, armed to the teeth with shotguns, grenade launchers and plasma guns.

Watch out for: dinos the height of skyscrapers.



Mortal Kombat 4

■ Developer: Midway
■ In a nutshell: Mortal Kombat 4 has been released on every current system from the N64 to the Game Boy. The N64 version was near-arcade perfect, and you can be assured that the Dreamcast version will be even closer.

■ Watch out for: babalities, grabable scenery, 3D backdrops and plenty of blood



Unreal

■ Developer: **Epic Megagames**

■ In a nutshell: fantastic first-person shooter that originated on the PC, relying heavily on up/down movement as well as the horizontal plane found in most in 3D shooters. It's hoped that multi-player Unreal should flagship Dreamcast's on-line capabilities. and the release version should probably feature some sort of single-machine multi-player game.

Watch out for: high Al; your enemies will duck,



Geist Force

■ Developer: Sega ■ In a nutshell: real-time, eyeball-bursting, gorgeous-looking, into the screen shoot-'em-up set in a futuristic aeroplane; a kind of Afterburner for the millennium. The action swings to the side at appropriate moments and multiple camera angles promise that your retinas will never get bored.

■ Watch out for: 60-frame-per-second updates will make it smoother than Des Lynam on the pull.



D₂

full-blown orchestra.

In a nutshell: horror-adventure game, split into travelling and fighting sections. The plot centres around Laura who – following a premonition that involves a huge meteorite hitting Earth – is involved in an air crash and wakes up in a strange hut guarded by two aesthetically challenged monsters. Your first objective is to work out what the hell is going on.

Listen out for: incidental in-game music from a



Daytona USA 2

■ Developer: **Sega**■ **In a nutshell:** another direct coin-op-to-Dreamcast driving game. The original *Daytona* suffered from appaling pop-up in the Saturn conversion (where distant objects suddenly appear from nowhere when you approach them). The Dreamcast's extra power should do the follow-up a little more justice

■ Watch out for: A futuristic track that's set in a



Climax Landers

Developer: Climax

■ In a nutshell: 3D role-playing, graphic adventure, with cute, cartoony graphics, a panning camera and real-time gameplay, very much in the mould of Zelda on the N64. Likely to be highly unplayable on Japanese import due to the heavy text-based nature

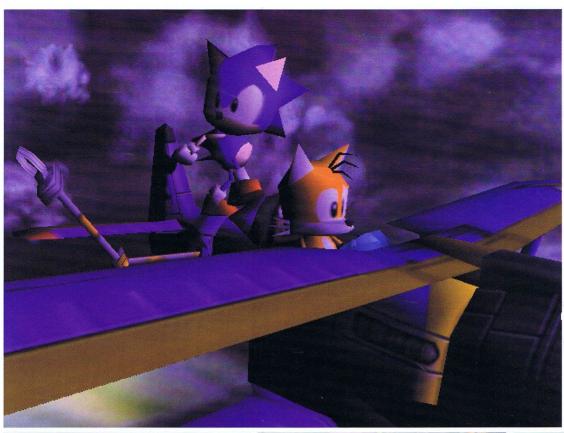
■ Watch out for: a great big helping of high-res



Seventh Cross

■ In a nutshell: a bizarre Tamagotchi-style breed-'em-up. You create a character — select its DNA by placing coloured squares on a 10 x 10 matrix — and then nurture your unique embryo to adulthood, killing the island's other lifeforms for food. It all sounds a little bit weird and, if the Japanese gaming tradition is anything to go by, it probably will be.

Watch out for: naked arses





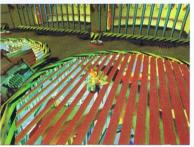














Sonic Adventure

- Sonic Adventure

 Publisher: Sega

 In a nutshell: Sega's big hope for Dreamcast has to be Sonic Adventure. Without the original Sonic The Hedgehog, the Mega Drive would never gotten as far as it did. Sonic's return in 3D will be used as a barometer for gauging Dreamcast's graphical potential and a lot of software publishers are postponing the development of their own Dreamcast games until they've seen it.

 Watch out for: All the features you remember from the original Sonic games (the robot enemies, Dr Robotnik, gold rings and plenty of speedy running), but now in 3D.





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Treated yourself to a **PlayStation** for Christmas? Just bought a shiny new **PC** in the sales? Nicked your nephew's **Nintendo 64**? Now let *Arcade* help you get up to speed. Life is too short to play anything but the very best games, and money's far too tight to waste on second-grade add-ons. So over the next six pages we show you which game to buy, which to rent, where your system came from and how to win pub fights over why your system's best...



PLAYSTATION

PlayStation is the most popular videogame console in the world. Over one-in-ten UK households with a TV have one. Well done if you managed to get hold of one over Christmas – shortages made Santa's job hell – but assuming you were lucky, let's get stuck in...

■ PlayStation refreshes the parts other games machines have never been able to reach.

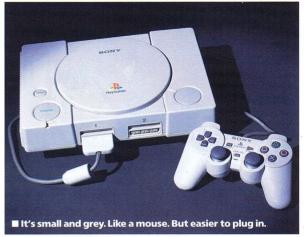
Breaking all records

All you need to know about the world's favourite games machine.

t's only three years old, but PlayStation is more popular than a hypothetical charity single featuring Robbie Williams, Kate Winslet and Boyzone. It's considerably more entertaining, too. It's a phenomenon. It's the biggest, most successful videogame console ever. And it took everyone by surprise, coming from Sony - a company with about as much hardcore videogame experience as the man from Del Monte. But right from the start it was obvious that PlayStation was going to be something a little bit special, sending gaming veterans like Sega scuttling for the bathroom in terror.

Back in 1995, Sony came into the games industry with the complete package: it had the best technology, it had a wallet stuffed with cash, and it had a far sharper marketing savvy. While Nintendo still targeted school playgrounds, the Walkman boys aimed for the twentysomethings, ran promotions in night clubs and let the entire world know that PlayStation wasn't kids' stuff.

The very first PlayStation games helped cement this older image, with *WipEout*, a futuristic racer from Psygnosis,



featuring music from The Chemical Brothers and funky Designers Republic imagery. Fighting game *Tekken* kicked ass. *Ridge Racer* burned rubber. With these extremely grown-up games, PlayStation wooed the public and won.

Despite a few wrong turns (let's not forget the "Society Against PlayStation" TV ads – featuring a tall, thin man with glasses ordering people not to buy one) Sony's handling of PlayStation has been a lesson in how to do marketing right. And it won't be satisfied until it's turned those four shapes on your controller (the square, cross, triangle and circle) into the PlayStation equivalent of the Nike "Swoosh" or McDonald's golden arches.

PlayStation has so much momentum that it's hard to

see it running out of steam any time soon. The games keep getting better and better, and while Nintendo 64 owners may correctly argue that the best Nintendo games are better than the best PlayStation games, Sony has two big trumps: choice and price. There are so many games released for PlayStation each month that you're bound to find a new classic or two among them. And there's no arguing with Sony's Platinum Collection of great albeit slightly old - games, rereleased at just £20. A bargain, in any language.

If you're a PlayStation owner, then count yourself lucky, safe in the knowledge that your games system is destined to live, thrive and survive for years to come.

How to...

Stuck on a game? It happens. It's a good job, then, you can cheat...



Score every time in FIFA 99

Always crossing into the box in an attempt to score? Foolish boy. Instead, you should be tapping X twice. This way, you'll pass to one of your men hanging around at the back, who's all ready to kick the ball into the net.



Cheat like a bastard in Tomb Raider III



Bike to victory in Crash Bandicoot 3

■ Tired of getting knocked off your bike by your opponents in the motorcycle time trials? Hang around on the starting line until those bad boys have gone, and you can bike on without running the risk of ending up snogging the ground.



Stop dying in Spyro The Dragon

■ Falling off cliffs and ledges is always an annoying way to lose a life. So, just after you fall off, press pause and exit the level. You'll restart at the last portal with all your lives intact. Mint!



Win every round in Tekken 3

■ No-one likes losing, so why not select Yoshimitsu and perform the Shark Attack move at the beginning of every round. This tactic should polish off most opponents immediately, making you an official Tekken God.

JUST STARTEU?

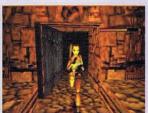
Five classic PlayStation games

Owning a PlayStation and not buying these games should be punishable by law.



ISS Pro '98

- Publisher: Konami Price: £45
- Football and PlayStation go together like a nice pint of lager and another nice pint of lager, and ISS Pro '98 is simply the best footy game available. It's got moves smoother than a grade-zero hair trim, and visuals so realistic that you ought to need a TV licence to watch them. It features all the teams from the World Cup and commentary from Tony Gubba. On these cold winter evenings, it's even better than the real thing.



Tomb Raider III Publisher: EIDOS Price: £45

■ Want to find out what all the Lara Croft fuss is about? Then you might as well get yourself stuck straight in to her latest and greatest adventure. Lara's an archeologist, but like Indiana Jones (who Lara's designer admits was a huge influence) her life involves a lot more than simple pot-scrubbing and soil-shifting. Puzzles, guns, dangerous animals, life-threatening leaps and underwater swimming it's all part of her day's work.



Gran Turismo ■ Publisher: SCEE ■ Price: £45

- Rival games developers cried into their beers when this worldbeating racing game showed what PlayStation had secretly been
- capable of. Gran Turismo features an entire showroom of real-world high-performance cars. You don't just get to drive them, they can also be fine-tuned to an extent that would confuse the bloke from Kwik Fit. What's more, the near-TV quality of the replays will make your jaw say "Hello" to the carpet.



Tekken 3

- Publisher: Namco Price: £35
- Namco's Tekken series is almost universally regarded as the source of PlayStation's best fighting action. While this threequel isn't particularly innovative, it's still a blockbuster - in every sense. With characters rendered in astonishing detail and faster moves than Michael Flatley on amphetamines, Tekken 3 is a beat-'em-up that's easy for beginners but promises near-infinite depth for anyone who's willing to follow "the way".



Resident Evil 2

- Publisher: Capcom Price: £45
- Ever wanted to star in your own zombie-slashing movie? Well now's your chance. Critics the world over have praised Resident Evil 2 as one of the most atmospheric and genuinely frightening videogames ever created. The camera angles are chosen so well, the twists and turns of the intricate plot inserted so expertly, and the huge scares delivered so frequently that you'll be hooked. Just don't play it with the lights off. And wear a nappy.

Unmissable bargains

Sony's Platinum label re-releases older classics at the unbeatable price of just £20.



WipeEout 2097

■ The success of futuristic racing game WipEout is one of the reasons why PlayStation got where it is today. And it's easy to see why. It features pumping tunes and a velocity to make Road Runner blush.



Soul Blade

■ Want to get medieval on your mate's ass? Then try this. Released between the Tekken instalments. Namco's olde-worlde beat-'em-up makes fighting fun by giving the characters a range of big



Parappa The

Don't ask us why pressing buttons in time to music in order to make a cartoon dog rap is so eniovable, but at least try it for yourself. You'll be humming the tunes in

Essential add-ons

Got extra cash? Then these gizmos will "giz" you the "most".

Steering wheel

- From: Thrustmaster
- Price: £69.99
- PlayStation's joypad isn't great for driving games, Luckily, this steering wheel and foot pedal combo is great. A must-have for all serious racing fans.





- Price: £34.99
- It only works with games specifically designed for it (like Point Blank and Time Crisis) but point it at the screen and you'll feel like Dirty Harry Callahan.

Rent before you buy

Most people love 'em, others don't get it. So try before you buy....



Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee

■ Publisher: GT ■ Price: £45

■ Cute as a button and chatty as a London cabbie, Abe the alien wanders about this picturesque 2D platform game, jumping, running and solving headscratching puzzles. The intro sequence is even up for an Oscar.



Crash **Bandicoot 3**

■ Publisher: SCEE
■ Price: £40

■ Despite its slightly repetitive nature, this is as near as PlayStation gets to a Mario game. The speedy into-thescreen 3D bits mix happily with the more open "wander around" areas, and it all looks like a cool TV cartoon.



Colin McRae Rally

Codemasters ■ Price: **£40**

If F1 racing isn't to your taste, try this authentic freewheel around the English countryside. The clock's your only opponent, and the brake's your only guard against becoming intimate with a hedge



Final Fantasy

Publisher Squaresoft/SCEE ■ Price: £45

■ Forget Titanic – this is the greatest story ever told, and you get to play the leading role. Final Fantasy VII is classed as an RPG (role playing game) but you could just as easily call it an nteractive movie"



Spyro The Dragon

- Publisher: SCEE
 Price: £35
- Don't be put off by the bright colours and inane grin of Spyro, the fire-breathing hero. This game can make itself as difficult as a particularly stubborn mule. Still, you kids will love it (and help you when you get stuck on level three)

Pub ammo

Unarguable proof that PlayStation is best.

- PlayStation's library of games is over 500 strong. So if you were to play every game for around an hour, and assuming that you had eight hours sleep each day to recover, it would take you over a month to work your way through them all. Please don't actually try and do this, though.
- you've got something in common with around three million other people in the UK alone. By contrast, if you wear an eye-patch for purely cosmetic reasons, you'll only find three other Britons who do the same And you probably wouldn't want to go down the pub with them anyway.
- games developers work primarily on PlayStation. Capcom (Resident Evil), Namco (Tekken) and Squaresoft (Final Fantasy) all turn to Sony's machine first when designing new titles, and none of them are ever likely to create a game starring a man who wears red and blue dungarees.
- If you own a PlayStation,
- Some of the world's best If you've ever had a longterm love, you'll be aware that the longer you spend with someone, the better you get to know them. And that this is a good thing. Because PlayStation's been hanging about for three years now, developers know the machine inside out, and can tease the very best from it. (Although some of them complain that the sex isn't as exciting any more.)
 - Because PlayStation games come on CD, you get more music and sumptuous video FMV sequences for your cash. You can even play music CDs on a PSX. Despite what N64 owners might say about this, they're dead, dead jealous



NINTENDO 64

Packed with super-expensive Silicon Graphics processors, the Nintendo 64 has got a slight graphical edge over PlayStation. It also has Shigeru Miyamoto, the world's best games designer, regularly churning out classics. But that's by no means all...

■ Nintendo 64: the best kept secret in videogames? The sales figures would certainly say so.

The best in the business

It may not have sold as many as PlayStation, but N64's still a beauty.

■ he N64 is a sturdy piece of kit. Who hasn't been turned on by the reassuring clunk of new cartridge meeting slot? Clunk! Mmmmm. Okav, so we might sound obsessed, but we're not the only ones. Nintendo's cult following is largely thanks to Nintendo's own Shigeru Miyamoto and his dream-team of programmers who've been churning out the best games in the world for the last 20-or-so years. Classics like *Mario* 64, Zelda 64, Mario Kart and Wave Race are the reasons why - despite not achieving the sales numbers of PlayStation - the N64 is truly loved by a core of loyal fans.

If it's so good then (you might be asking yourself) why isn't Nintendo 64 the world's number one console and PlayStation the machine with the smaller cult following? Well, a combination of poor marketing, expensive prices, multiple delays and a lack of games in crucial areas (it took ages for any decent sports games to be released on the system) gave PlayStation a massive head-start that Nintendo's never been able to catch up with.

It's this lack of games that



is still Nintendo's biggest problem. Although the trickle of great Nintendo 64 releases has turned into a stream, it's still a long way from rivalling the torrent of new PlayStation games that pours into the shops each month.

Why? Without getting bogged down in the business of it all, it comes down to the use of cartridges instead of CDs. Cartridges cost more to make than CDs and so if a publisher decides to release a game on N64 then it runs a bigger risk of losing buckets of cash if the game flops. It's one thing to be left with 10,000 CDs on your hands that cost just £3 to make, it's quite another to be left with 10,000 £20 cartridges.

Only Acclaim and Nintendo itself have truly got their teeth

stuck into the business of making N64 games. And while this is okay in some ways (no one makes games better than Nintendo) it does mean that N64 will never enjoy the same volume of releases as PlayStation.

But the future is bright. With Nintendo focusing much more on the UK (typically it's ignored Europe in favour of Japan and the US), we're finally getting the big name games quickly. It's also true to say that Nintendo 64 still has lots to give in terms of untapped potential - each new game seems better than the last. And with N64 games regularly slam-dunking straight into the charts at number one, it's hard to say that N64 is in anything other than the prime of its life.

How to...

Even the best players occasionally need a little competitive edge.



Keep yourself healthy in The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time

Grab yourself an empty bottle, wander up to any cow and play "Epona's Song" (Top-C, Left-C, Right-C). They'll fill up your jar with two gulps of refreshing milk, which you can drink to restore maximum health yum.



Inflate heads in *Turok 2*

■ We're always up for a bit of big-head action. Type UBERNOODLE on the "Enter Cheats" menu option, and you can wander around laughing at the enemy's massive bonces to your heart's content. Just remember to tape your sides up when you've finished.



Live forever in Banjo-Kazooie

Go to the sandcastle on. In Treasure Trove Cove and use the Beak-Buster move (A then 2) to spell out CHEAT, then try AGOLDENGLOWTOPR OTECTBANJO (as one word with no spaces). You'll now have infinite golden feathers. Hurrah!



Be a manager in WCW vs NWO Revenge

■ If you've got three friends round, select a two-player one-on-one exhibition match and two vrestlers with managers. If your friends press Z on the third and fourth controllers, they can take control of the managers. Yes!



Get a head start in 1080° Snowboarding

■ If you're always losing in races, try this trick. Wait until the "1" of the start countdown has just disappeared from the screen, and push Up on the stick. You should get a magic boost and leave your opponent standing, you cheeky little monkey

JUST STARTED?

Got an N64? Then get these

Some of the best games in the world are only available on Nintendo 64.



The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

- Publisher: Nintendo
- Price: £50
- Throw the 'phone in the river, lock the door and nail the catflap shut. Three years in the making and worth every second's wait. Zelda will eat up your time like no other game. At heart, it's a roleplaying game, with the emphasis on conversations, combat and collecting objects, and it's so beautiful in glossy 3D that you'll play it until your eyes burn.



1080 Snowboarding

- Publisher: Nintendo
- Price: £40
- If you're just not cool enough to be seen snowboarding with Prince William, this stunning N64 game brought to you by the team who created the sublime Wave Race 64 (see page 156) - is as near as dammit, You'll really be shivering as you fly majestically off ramps, glide effortlessly through deep snow and fall flat on your face, all the while admiring the sheer graphical splendour of your surroundings.



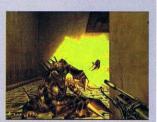
Goldeneve 007

- Publisher: Nintendo/Rare
- Price F40
- Step into the shoes of James Bond, strap on a satchel-full of pants-wetting guns and smack the Ruskies to kingdom come. This is as near as most of us will ever come to actually being a secret agent with a license to kill, let alone driving a tank through the streets of St Petersburg. The fourplayer game mode (shoot all your mates before they shoot you) is as good as gaming gets.



Mario Kart 64

- Publisher: Nintendo
- Price: £40
- Comedy cartoon-style racing isn't everyone's cup of tea, but stick four people in front of an N64 loaded with Mario Kart and chances are you'll only get them to move again by setting their hair on fire. The game's hook comes from the pleasing ease with which you can powerslide round corners and fire all manner of projectiles up your rival's exhaust pipe. The best party game since Strip Twister.



Turok 2: Seeds Of Evil

- Publisher: Acclaim
- Price: £40
- Welcome to planet Turok, where you can fire a special weapon at someone's head and watch their brains come flying out without fear of arrest. Turok 2 is Nintendo's biggest, goriest, best-looking 3D shooting game with prehistoric monsters that demonstrate a horrifying level of intelligence (before you blow them to pieces). You and three friends can even rumble in the jungle together.

Keep an eye out for...

N64 has no budget games as such, but you can pick up these golden oldies second hand.



Super Mario 64

- Publisher: Nintendo Price: £40 (new)
- This is the game that made the leap from 2D to 3D and dragged the rest must play this game.



- Publisher: Nintendo Price: £40 (new)
- Simply the best waterbased racing game ever, and still one of Nintendo 64's best-kept secrets.



Pilotwings 64

- Publisher: Ninter:
 Price: £40 (new)
- Take to the skies and soar like an eagle (or plummet like a stone) in a range of different craft.





4Mb Expansion

- From: THE
- Price: £29.99
- Slot this in the top of your N64 and certain games will spurt forth with much-improved graphics. More compatible games are arriving each month.



Action Replay

- From: Datel
- Price: £49.99
- Rubbish at games? Then this will let you cheat like the devil.

Off the beaten path

These games are great, and well worth checking out for yourself.



F-Zero X ■ Publisher: Nintendo

- Price: £40
- that it'll make you cry? Futuristic racer F-Zero will chuck you about at 1,000kph and let you experience your last meal all over again. It's impressive enough in olo play, but in fourplayer mode you'll wonder just how N64 manages to keep up.



F1 World **Grand Prix**

- Publisher: Nintendo Price: £50
- Okay, so F1 racing is hardly off of the beaten path, but we didn't have room to include it in the "must have" box. This game easily outclasses PlayStation's recent F1 '98' with very little effort - iust like a Porche roaring past a Reliant Robin on the A6



Fighter's Destiny Publisher: Ocean

- Price: £55
- The N64 struggled for a decent fighting game until this one came along. It's more a fists-flying funkster than a considered *Tekken* or Virtua Fighter 3tb of a game, but it's still a fine punch-'em-up all round.



Mystical Ninja Starring Goemon

- Publisher: Ocean Price: £60
- Supposedly based
- on an obscure Japanese legend, this 3D running/ jumping/trying not to die a grisly death/roleplaying hybrid won't last long, but offers a very absorbing puzzle mix in the meantime



Lylat Wars ■ Publisher: Nintendo ■ Price: £55

- Mr Mivamoto
- showing off at how good he is at making games again. This is a brilliantly-crafted oldfashioned space shoot-'em-up, with animals in the starring roles and more amusing speech than a particularly noisy Robin Williams sketch.

Pub ammo

Unarguable proof that Nintendo 64 is best.

- Mr Shigeru Miyamoto and his team of coprogrammers and designers are simply the best games developers in the world, and like Kelloggs – they don't make games for anyone else. We know we go on about him, but he is that good. It's compulsory for the lesser N64 developers to have a bronze statue of Mr Miyamoto in their bedrooms. Or so a bloke down the pub told us.
- Two-player link-up? Pah! The N64 offers fourplayer fun the moment it comes out of the box. Mario Kart 64. GoldenEye 007, F-Zero X and a shedful of others

offer the best multi-person shenanigans since

- While other systems are stuck with purple My Little Pony's and stupid blue hedgehogs, the N64's got Mario, Yoshi, Wario
 - and a whole host of other truly loveable characters. And. it sounds soft, but after a
- while you do get attached to the little beggars.
- Look at that controller. Hold it. Feel it. Love it. Nintendo has invented and patented the world's best iovpad design. Thanks to this, Mario can negotiate treacherous platforms with ease, while the PlayStation's Lara Croft slips and falls to her death at least seven times per day.
 - While those poor PlayStation owners have to sit watching a static screen with the word "Loading" stamped across it, N64 owners get instant access from their chunky cartridges. Despite what they say, PlayStation owners are dead jealous of this.



PC: GAMES MACHINE

Costs over £1,000. Can be a bitch to use. Won't plug into your TV. Not even designed to play games. And yet some of gaming's finest - and we mean *finest* - hours take place sat in front of a PC monitor. Indeed, most hardcore gamers won't play anywhere else.



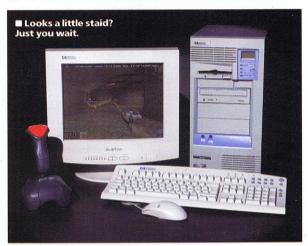
homework on a PlyStation. Many kids more determined than you have tried. You can, however, mix work and play on a PC.

Business and pleasure

Confused by all this talk of "P" and "C"? Here are the facts.

he PC was never designed to be used as a games machine. It was designed for serious, officey use. But, just like every elastic band has, at some point, been twanged at an unsuspecting colleague, so every PC, sooner or later, is poked and then prodded and the fatal question "So, how do we play games on this thing?" is asked. The answer, traditionally, has been "not very easily" but now, thanks to Bill **Gates and his Windows** 95 operating system, running games on your PC is considerably easier than finding the soap in the bath.

While you're thanking Bill, raise a glass to 3Dfx and other technology companies who have dedicated themselves to making 3D accelerator cards. With one of these firmly slotted inside your computer, 3D shapes can fly about your monitor like daddy-longlegs gone wild. And this means that great 3D games become possible. Imagine a version of Tomb Raider or Half-Life fashioned from cardboard cut-outs and drawing pins, and you have some idea of what life without these magic circuit boards would be like. These brilliant technological



innovations helped harness the PC's power as a games machine - and this has led the PC to the forefront of a gameplay revolution.

Before 3Dfx and Win 95 came along, games on PCs were largely tedious RPGs and snooze-worthy flight sims. It was all wooden swords, woven cloaks and thousandpage instruction manuals. Nowadays games like Quake, Command & Conquer, Half-Life, Grim Fandango and X-wing versus TIE-Fighter offer gaming experiences that are simply leagues ahead of their console equivalents.

Gaming on the PC isn't completely glitch free games can still take an age to install and there's a minefield of potential technological incompatibilities to negotiate

- but nevertheless, every month millions of gamers grit their teeth and dive head-first into the PC's sea of titles.

To play most new PC games at a satisfactory level you'll need at least a system based on a P166 with a 3D card (may we suggest 3Dfx's Voodoo 2) and at least 32Mb of RAM. Ideally you'll have a P233-based system with 64Mb of RAM. Of course, technology continues to march forward and so no matter what PC setup you buy, sooner or later you'll need to upgrade. But then it's the same with consoles.

On the subject of which, Sega's new Dreamcast system shares a lot of the PC's innards - so you can expect lots of games crossing between the two. Excited? You should be.

How to...

"Get it going on" with the help of these bite-size tips.



Stay alive in Half-Life

Running out of health? Always an astonishing faux pas. So plunge into the nearest (non-toxic) water stay under until you see the O2 warning, and then come back up. You'll have gained about 15 units of health in the process. Yes!



Take Abe anywhere in Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee

■ To bring up a list of all the levels, hold down (shift) and enter this code (using the arrow keys): Down, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Up. The world, as they say, is your oyster



Go wherever the hell you like within Trespasser

■ Tired of getting stuck on a particular level? Why not press [ctrl] + [shift] + Q + W, and then release W. Now you can confront those dodgy dinos on any level you wish.



Cheat like a bugger in SiN

■ Press the tilde button (~) on your keyboard to get the console, and then type /superfuzz for God mode, /health 999 for maximum health and /wuss for all weapons. It simply doesn't get any better than this, my friends.



Enjoy classic matches in World Cup '98

Go to the names menu, change the player's name to Hurst and then go back. Then trip on over to the main menu and press Scroll Lock. You've now got four classic matches to play. Alternatively, you can use the name Zico to get a historic play from 1982. Huzzah!

JUST STARTED?

The best PC games on the planet

At its best, PC gaming is as good as gaming gets. Here are five reasons why...



Starcraft

- Publisher: Blizzard
- Price: £40
- The "real time strategy" (or RTS) genre of games places you at the control of a team of characters with a mission. Depending on the game you decide to buy, you might need to invade and conquer a country, build a dock and sail a boat across a river or decide whose turn it is to do the washing up and then do it (hang on, that's real life). But it's a load of fun, and nowhere is it more fun than in Starcraft.



Quake II

- Publisher: Activision
- Price: £40
- A first-person (the graphics show the view as if through your eyes) shooter (you shoot things) that's addictive as a solo-player game and un-putdownable in multi-player mode. Quake II piles on terrifying beasties, stupidly big guns and some hauntingly dark dungeons, and you'll be rounding each corner with a genuine feeling of terror. Play with a group of friends and you'll never quit.



Grim Fandango

- Publisher: LucasArts
- Price: £40
- Probably the best "point-andclick adventure" ever, Grim Fandango is moody, funny and brilliantly designed. Set in the Land of the Dead and clad in film-noir splendour, its comedy characters, genuinely involving storyline and perplexing puzzles make for a truly enthralling experience. If you prefer your games a little slower paced than Quake It's mayhem, you must try this one out.



Half-Life

- Publisher: Sierra
- Price: **£40**
- It was a long time coming, but calling the result simply "another first-person shooter" would be an insult to Sierra's latest masterpiece. Characters interact more believably than real people, the baddies you meet demonstrate a frightening intelligence and the levels require a brain-stretching amount of lateral thinking. The last CD to contain this much entertainment was Russ Abbott's Atmosphere.



Tomb Raider III

- Publisher: EIDOS
- Price: £40
- If you haven't invited Lara into your home yet, now's the time to do it. Tomb Raider III's a big-bapped blend of sumptuous graphics, devious puzzles and all-out shooting. On a journey from dank cave systems to the streets of London, Lara won't release her hold on your waking hours until you've helped her finish her mission. And we know you're not the sort who'll refuse a lady.

Going cheap

Some great games at knock-down prices.



Dungeon Keeper ■ Publisher: EA Classics

- Price: £13
- The opportunity to manage your own torture chamber in the pits of hell is too good to pass up. especially as this real-time strategy take on the



Total Annihilation

- Publisher: GT Replay ■ Price: £13
- Another real time strategy game, this time set in the deep reaches of space. The 3D graphics, enormous robot and evil aliens make this every schoolboy's dream job.



- LBA 2 FA Classics Price: £13
- The sequel to the critically-acclaimed Little Big Adventure turns the graphics knob up to 11 and offers an intriguing world that's even more complex than the London Underground.

What next?

Your PC's crying out for its slots to be filled.

"Stuff"

Stubbornly stick to your PC's current specs and you'll find the future's best games denied to you. So get some more "stuff" in (memory, processors, all that sort of thing) and revel in the speed of your machine.



Steering wheel

- A must for all those driving games you know you'll want to play. Adds immeasurably to the sense of realism.



■ Try upgrading a

Check these out...

Five games that are definitely worth borrowing off your mate.



Grand Theft Auto

- Publisher: Take 2 ■ Price: £19
- Bad-taste crim-'emup where trafficking drugs, hijacking cars and smacking cops up real nice are all part of a day's work.



Forsaken ■ Publisher: Acclaim ■ Price: £13

- Quake on a jet bike
- and transported to the future. The stunning, claustrophobic tunnels and sheer difficulty will keep you plugging away for months.



Destruction Derby 2

- Price: £10
- The game that put the 'arrrgggh!' into "arcade racing". As you skid, smash, jump and roll and through the tracks, your stomach will be in knots but your brain in rapture.



The Curse of Monkey Island

- Price: £30
- One of the funniest games on any system ever. If you fancy being a pirate, digging for treasure, firing people out of cannons and having a fine laugh in the process, this is the game for you.



Rainbow Six ■ Publisher: Red Storm ■ Price: £35

■ Developed under the watchful eye of Tom Clancey, this is a first-person shooter where you'll need seven days of advance planning before you even pick up a gun. It sounds dull, but in actual fact you'll find it both intelligent and thoughtful. And difficult.

Pub ammo

Unarguable proof that PC gaming is best.

- Run! Go on! Run as fast as you can! No matter how hard you try, you just can't run faster than a PC. Take a look under the hood and you'll soon see that a PC is technically more muscley than either PlayStation or Nintendo 64. Because of this, games look great, animate smoothly and act more intelligently. You can stop running now.
- Despite the mouse/ keyboard control combination being an absolute nightmare to begin with, once you get to grips with it you'll never want to go back to restrictions of a simple joypad. The PC's version is accurate, fast and far less stressful on
- How many offices have you visited that don't have PCs sitting happily on the desks? How many people, when choosing a computer for the home, plump for a 7X Spectrum or Speak 'n' Spell? The PC is the most ubiquitous computing planet, so you'll never be short of games (or



Internet and all that. The World Wide Web not only gives PC users the chance to play chess against people millions of iles away, but also offers billions of free, partly-free and not-free-at-all games. They take three hours to download, of course, but that's not

Edited by | Mark Green

Christmas has been and gone. Find out what was number one and why.

Official All-Formats Top 40





(-) FIFA 99 PSX/PC, EA Sports

It's official, then - footy beats birds. The tendency for people to buy any old FIFA game regardless of its review score is consistently depressing, but regardless of what we think, EA Sports has scored again.

PSX/PC, EIDOS



Lara's back with style, selling nearly 150,000 in her first three weeks on sale. If she'd only managed to flog a couple of hundred

more of part three, she'd be at the top.

(1) Spyro the Dragon

With less than half the sales of the number



two game, this cutesy, purple. fire-breathing My Little Pony drops from the top quicker than you can say "Puff".

(-) Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus

PSX, GT Interactive



An unsurprising crash into the top five for this excellent platformer. The prequel, though, is nowhere to be seen.

(7) Tekken 3

PSX, Namco



After a worrying couple of months, the King of Fighters is back to reclaim its position in the Top 5.

6 (2) TOCA Touring Car Championship

Like a mad professor, TOCA is losing its grip but laughing at those below. Its offspring has failed to clinch a higher placing.

Oh, the irony! Better than its prequel, but mysteriously coming in at a lower position.

This lacklustre cash-in really deserves to be

falling a lot faster than this, but there's no accounting for taste.

9 (4) Grand Theft Auto PSX/PC, Take 2 (budget)

This cop-shooting extravaganza falls after a big climb last month. It just goes to show that crime doesn't pay after all.

10 (10) Small Soldiers

Dire nonsense, but the film's relative popularity has secured it a Top 10 position.

After bouncing up last week, Crash 1 has bounced back down once again, thanks to Crash 3 on the horizon.

12 (11) V Rally Not a good month for rallying games, as V-Rally takes a dive, swiftly followed by...

13 (12) Colin McRae Rally PSX/P After a spectacular fall last month, Colin's clinging on by his fingertips. It won't last.

14 (30) Hercules PSX/PC, SCEE (budget)

A huge climb for this Disney-based title, largely cos Santa bought it for all the kids.

15 (16) Tomb Raider II

Lara-on- Lara action! TR II overtakes its prequel, but TR III is affecting sales fast.

16 (13) Tomb Raider Lara's first adventure slips down the chart now the third instalment is here.

This shoot-'em-up par excellence hasn't done too badly at all, and it's the highest placed PC-only game.

18 (-) Apocalypse

Bruce Willis' appearance here obviously isn't as much of a pull as in the movies.

It's been creeping up for weeks, and now this sub-standard plat-fest's in the top 20.

20 (9) World Cup '98

The officially licensed game, plunging down the table faster than Peterborough.

21 (15) WWF: Warzone PSX/N64/GB, Acclain

22 (8) Premier Manager '98 PSX/PC, Gremlin

23 (14) 1080° Snowboarding N64, Nintendo

26 (19) Die Hard Trilogy

24 (-) Mickey's Wild Adventure

25 (17) Croc

27 (-) Worms 28 (-) Music

29 (-) Cool Boarders 3

30 (25) Gran Turismo

31 (21) Banio-Kazooie

32 (18) F1 World Grand Prix

33 (20) Resident Evil

34 (34) Gameboy Gallery

35 (-) Time Crisis

PSX. SCEE (b

36 (28) Tekken 2

PSX, SCEE (b)

37 (27) Spiceworld

38 (3) Tenchu: Stealth Assassins

39 (23) FIA Formula 1

40 (39) Heart of Darkness PSX/PC, Info

■ CHARTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH CHART TRACK & ELSPA

PlayStation Top 10

1(-) FIFA 99 2 (-) Tomb Raider III

3 (1) Spyro the Dragon 4 (-) Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus

5 (6) Tekken 3

7 (-) TOCA 2 Touring Cars

6 (2) TOCA Touring

Car Championship

8 (4) Formula 1'98

9 (5) Crash Bandicoot

Average footy controversially beats lovely Lara to the top spot. And look at F1'98's fall.

PC Top 10

1(-) Tomb Raider III EIDOS 2 (-) Half-Life

3 (-) FIFA 99 **EA Sports** 4 (3) Combat Flight Simulator

5 (-) South Park Theme

& Screensaver 6 (-) Lego Creator

7 (10) Colin McRae Rally

Virtual Springfield Fox Interactiv 9 (-) Populous: The Beginning EA

10 (8) Titanic - Adventure Out Of Time New entries a-plenty. And look,

Colin McRae moving back up.

N64 Top 10

1 (1) 1080° Snowboarding

2 (3) Banio-Kazooie 3 (2) F1 World Grand Prix

4 (5) Super Mario 64

5 (-) WCW vs NWO Revengetho 6 (7) Mission: Impossible Ocean

7 (6) GoldenEye 007 Nintendo 8 (4) F-Zero X

9 (10) Mario Kart 64 Nintendo 10 (-) WWF: Warzone

1080° is still beaming down from the top slot, while THQ's lacklustre wrestling nonsense comes crashing in at five.

mport zone With NextGen (0181 339 0666)



■ The distant sound of hooves can only mean NextGen's Steve Lucas is riding up on his silver mule. "Wooaahhh, there!" Hello, Steve. What's import sales have Dreamcast thingy?

been helping fill your wallet this month? "Ridge Racer 4 on the PSX is doing well, and I'm looking forward to Final Fantasy VIII." 'Giddyup!" What about that

"Yep, that's been selling okay." Only okay? "Well, if you don't like Virtua Fighter, you're not really going to want the console." Much else? "Damn Nintendo! It's made the US Zelda incompatible with UK consoles, so I can't sell it!" Tut. So what are you most looking forward to? "Sonic Adventure and Sega Rally 2 should help Dreamcast no end." Thanks, Steve.

■ Hands up anyone who's even remotely surprised that Zelda's at number one.

Japanese Allormat Top 10

1(-) The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

2 (-) Dragon Quest Monsters

3 (-) Poporogue

4 (-) Virtua Fighter 3TB DC, Sega

5 (-) Libero Grande PSX, Namco 6 (-) Exodus Guilty

7 (-) Fighting Illusion K-1

Grand Prix '98 8 (3) Pocket Monsters Pikachu

9 (-) Eurasia Express Murder

10 (-) Hepatica Flowers PSX, SCEI

US Console Top 5

1 NBA Live 99 2 Twisted Metal 3 PSX SCEL 3 Metal Gear Solid 4 Crash 3 5 WCW vs NWO Revenge

US PC Top 5

1 (1) Deer Hunter II 3D

2 (-) Barbie Riding Club Mattel

3 (-) Lego Island

4 (-) Microsoft Combat

Flight Simulator 5 (-) Cabela's Big Game

Hunter 2 US charts supplied by PC-Data

Get your money back

Ten videogame machines that kept playing hard to get.



f you think waiting for Dreamcast is painful, spare a thought for the gamers

who waited patiently (and not so patiently) for this lot. Delays, hold-ups and total cancellations meant that these machines were killed completely, or old-hat by the time that they arrived. So, the next time someone tells you they're eagerly awaiting the PlayStation 2 or Nintendo 2000, tell them not to hold their breath. They might just suffocate in the process.

1. Elan Enterprise

An astonishing year-and-a-half passed between announcement and release date for this machine. By 1985, it had changed its name three times; from the ill advised "Elan", to the stupid "Flan", to the ridiculous "'Samurai", until finally settling on the rather misleading "Enterprise". Appropriately enough, by the time the Enterprise appeared it was as up-to-date and popular as William Shatner.

2. Game Boy Color

Nintendo's coloured version of its mono handheld was the subject of rumours as far back as 1990. Gamers chattered excitedly about the infinite potential for Game Boy games exploding with colour, but it would be eight years later before Nintendo relented and moved on from monochrome. Launch games: Color Tetris and Game & Watch Collection. Worth the wait, then.

3. Sinclair QL

After the success of the calculatorkeyed ZX Spectrum, Sir Clive announced the more serious 16-bit QL in January 1984. Four months of cashed cheques later, he delivered it. The inclusion of a small box which held all the bits



■ The old Amiga 1200 and its funny looking friend.

that wouldn't fit in the QL's casing was a touching testament to the machine's crapness.

4. Nintendo 64

The Big N's policy during the N64's development was a bit odd One: reveal tantalising glimpse of machine and sublime Super Mario 64 game. Two: go into sulk and refuse to talk about anything at all to do with N64. Three: push back release date until everyone has a PlayStation. Four: produce finished machine two years late and cry when not enough people buy it.

5. Konix Multi-System Joystick manufacturer Konix over-

reached itself slightly with plans for this super-console. Promised add-ons included a motorcycle handlebar and, amazingly, a plugin hydraulic chair. A lack of ideas, support and decent games saw it touched by Death soon after. Later, however, it resurfaced as the Atari Jaguar, which suffered from a lack of ideas, support and decent games (and so on).

6. PlayStation 2

Ever since Sony's PlayStation took control of the civilised world, ridiculous rumours of PlayStation 2 just won't stop coming. Since last year, they've gone into overdrive, taking in the "inevitable" Tokyo

Game Show announcement (nonexistent), the supposed format (DVD? Mini-disc? Who cares?), and a "photo" of the PlayStation 2 that resembled a purple sandwich-maker

7. Loki

The so-called "Super Spectrum" was in development as far back as 1986, but avid Speccy fans have been waiting for it to make an appearance for the last 13 years. Clive wandered off to make a folding bicycle and the smallest radio in the world instead, and the closest the machine got to release was the "Chocolate Spectrum" created by Sinclair User magazine.

8. The New **Amiga**

Commodore's original Amiga recruited many fans during its lifetime, but now restricts itself to garnering numerous crazed fanatics, all screaming about the health of the Amiga scene. The promises of a next generation machine based on Power PC architecture are enough to keep Amiga owners' wafer-thin hopes alive, but they're going to have to wait until at least 2000 to see it.

the famed PC Engine. Top!

9. PC Engine

Brilliant arcade-perfect conversions! Drop-dead gorgeous graphics! Every top developer producing games for it! Just some of the reasons why the PC Engine was too good for Europe. Manufacturers NEC even went as far as to publish magazine adverts, warning anyone who bought an illegal import machine that they would fall foul of the wrath of some ancient Oriental cause. We think.

10. Sam Coupe

Another Super-Spectrum that died a particularly horrible death. Literally thousands were eagerly awaiting this improved Spectrum clone, but when it turned up bugged to high heaven and looking like something you'd prop your bedroom door open with, it lost fans faster than Gary Glitter.

Top 10 porn game titles

1. Lace Invaders

2. NBA Live Sex Show '98

3. Sid Meier's Getting It!

4. Wild 69

5. Womb Raider

6. Super Mario 64 Women in

One Night

7. Diddy Kong Racy

8. XXX-wing vs Thai prostitute

9. Kensai Sacred Fisting 10. Treasures of the Deep

Chart Analysis By Mr Evil

■ Bwa-ha-ha-haaaa! Hello everybody. My name's Mr Evil. It's my job to assess how far THE DESPICABLE FORCES OF EVIL have penetrated the games chart. This month, readings from my Evil-o-meter™ enable me to chuckle menacingly as I realise that over half of this month's games feature gratuitous killing, maiming or wounding of some horrible description. Result! Ha-

frown



40

maniacal

laughter

Evil-o-meter™: number of games containing evil this month

0 scarv moan chuckle evil cackle baby

VOX-POP What are New York's gamers like?



Yo, vo, daddy-o. "Hello. I'm Jon." Someone asked us if we wanted our egg 'sunny side up' today. Eh? "That means fried. 'Over easy' means cooked both sides." Oh, right. Like games? "Yes, I want Zelda, but it's sold out." NY Toys-"9"-Us is huge, isn't it? "Dy'reckon?" Yes. Cheers!



■ "Hi, I'm Cathy." Hi. Cool Police Department, Not like England. "I've been to England." Did you like it? "Yes." Like games? "Not really - I like that shooting one." Time Crisis? "Yes." You can get that on the PlayStation, you know. [Nonplussed.] "Oh. Right. Bye."



■ Hello. Like games? "Tomb Raider III. Have you seen the ad?" What ad? "Round here." [Takes us round corner. Points to biggest picture of Lara you've ever seen.] Blimey, Charlie. America, eh? Who was it again? "Mike." Cheers, Mike. Oh, and have a nice day. "Er, yeah."

■ PHOTOGRAPHY: KOBAL COLLECTIO

Vaiting for a specific game? It'll get here eventually. Here's our best guess when...

Jan	uary		
8th	RC Stunt Copter	Interplay	PSX
8th	Tai Fu	Activision	PSX
8th	Curse Of Monkey Island	LucasArts	PC
8th	Jedi Knight: The Mysteries		
	Of The Sith	LucasArts	PC
8th	Outlaws	LucasArts	PC
8th	Shadows of the Empire Classic	LucasArts	PC
8th	Star Wars Compilation	LucasArts	PC
8th	Star Wars Supremacy	LucasArts	PC
8th	WipEout 64	Midway	N64
8th	Gex	GT	CGB
8th	Mortal Kombat 4	Midway	CGB
8th	Pocket Tales Conker	Rare	CGB
15th	Global domination	Psygnosis	PSX
15th	Max Power Racing	Infogrames	PSX
15th	PFA Soccer	EIDOS	PSX
100	Deth Karz	Infogrames	PC
	Saga	Cryo	PC
	Speedbusters	Ubisoft	PC
15th		Midway	N64
15th		Take 2	CGB
15th	Montezuma's Return	Take 2	CGB
15th	NBA Jam '99	Acclaim	CGB
dental and the	NFL Blitz	Midway	CGB
The second second	Pinball	Take 2	CGB
	Rampage World Tour	Midway	CGB
15th	Reservoir Rat	Take 2	CGB
22-4	Diamar Manager 2	Anco	DCV
-	Player Manager 2 Premier Manager '99	Gremlin	PSX PSX
The Section 2015	Sensible Soccer: Club Edition	Warner	PSX
	Soul Blade	Sony Platinum	PSX
-	Rogue Squadron	Nintendo	N64
ANIMALINAME	Virtual Pool	Crave	N64
	Men In Black		CGB
	Pitfall	Infogrames Take 2	CGB
100	Tennis 2	Nintendo	CGB
	Wario Land 2	Nintendo	CGB
KIND OF BUILDING	Zelda	Nintendo	CGB
201	D 40 W 41 T 5 15		De
	Pro 18: World Tour Golf	Psygnosis	PC N.C.4
SCOTTON CONTRACTOR	Twisted Edge Snowboarding	Midway	N64
29th	Bugs & Lola	Infogrames	CGB
	Devil Dice	Sony	PSX
The second second	Dreams	Cryo	PSX
	NFL Extreme	Sony	PSX
	Pro Boarders	Sony	PSX
	Wild Arms	Sony	PSX
TBA	Monkey Hero	Take 2	PSX
TBA	Actua Golf 2 Premier Collection	Gremlin	PC
ТВА	Actua Soccer 2 Premier	Custollin	DC
	Collection	Gremlin	PC

TBA	Biosys	Take 2	PC
TBA	Civilization 2	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Daikatana	EIDOS	PC
TBA	Dragonflight	Grolier	PC
TBA	F-16 Aggressor	Virgin	PC
TBA	Flight Unlimited 2 Premier		
	Collection	EIDOS	PC
TBA	Great Britain 3	Take 2	PC
TBA	Homeworld	Cendant	PC
TBA	Hype the Time Quest	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Liath	Project 2	PC
TBA	May Day!!	Take 2	PC
TBA	Rocky Horror Picture Show	Black Friar	PC
TBA	Roggahub	Grolier	PC
TBA	Shadowpack	Blue-Byte	PC
TBA	Tank Racer	`Grolier	PC
TBA	The Real Neverending Story	Discreet	PC
TBA	Thrust Twist and Turn	Take 2	PC
TBA	Turok 2	Acclaim	PC
TBA	Unreal Level Pack	GT	PC
TBA	Viva Football	Virgin	PC
TBA	Worms Armageddon	Team 17	PC
TBA	All Star Tennis '99	Ubisoft	N64
TBA	Mud Monsters	Take 2	N64
TBA	Star Wars: Rogue Squadron	LucasArts	N64
_			
13	orulary		

Akuji the Heartless

Starcraft Battle Chest

A Bug's Life

A Bug's Life

Delta Force

Caesar's Palace

Wicked Surfing

WCW Thunder

Metal Gear Solid

Earthworm Jim 3D

No Fear Downhill

Mountain Biking

Running Wild

Space Invaders

Viva Football

Alien vs Predator

Alpha Centauri

Baja 1000 Racing

TBA Brian Lara Cricket

Tribal

The Gran Stream Saga

Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine

Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver Monaco Grand Prix Racing Sim

19th Lion King 2

TBA Joe Blow

5th

5th

5th

5th

5th

12th

TBA

TBA

TBA

TBA TBA

TBA

TBA

TBA

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TBA

Take 2	PC
MicroProse	PC
EIDOS	PC
Grolier	PC
Virgin	PC
EIDOS	PC
Take 2	PC
Cendant	PC
Ubisoft	PC
Project 2	PC
Take 2	PC
Black Friar	PC
Grolier	PC
Blue-Byte	PC
Grolier	PC
Discreet	PC
Take 2	PC
Acclaim	PC
GT	PC
Virgin	PC
Team 17	PC
Ubisoft	N64
Take 2	N64
LucasArts	N64

EIDOS

Sony

Disney

Novalogic

Cendant

Nintendo

Nintendo

THO

Disney

Konami

Interplay

LucasArts

PSX

PC

PC

PC

Telstar

EIDOS

Ubisoft

Sony

Sony

Sony

Virgin EA/Fox

EA

Codemasters

Activision

IDA	Championship Manager 3	EIDO3
TBA	Civilization: Call To Power	Activision
TBA	Command & Conquer 2	EA
TBA	Diablo 2	Cendant
TBA	Drakan	Psygnosis
TBA	Duke Nukem 4ever	GT
TBA	Dungeon Keeper 2	EA
TBA	Extreme Warfare	Brøderbun
TBA	Force Commander	LucasArts
TBA	Heavy Gear 2	Activision
TBA	Lands of Lore 3	Westwood
TBA	Machines	Acclaim
TBA	Malkari	Interactive I
TBA	Messiah	Interplay
TBA	No Fear Downhill	
	Mountain Biking	Codemaste
TBA	Omikron	EIDOS
TBA	Outcast	Infogrames
Parking St. Action	Prax Wars	EA
TBA	Premier Manager '99	Gremlin
TBA	Prince Naseem Boxing	Codemaste
TBA	Reel Feel Golf	Ubisoft
TBA	Revenant	EIDOS
TBA	Sim City 3000	EA
TBA	South Park	Acclaim
TBA	Star Trek: First Contact	MicroProse
TBA	Star Wars: Force Commander	LucasArts
TBA	Star Wars: X-Wing Alliance	LucasArts
TBA	Starship Troopers	MicroProse
TBA	Superbikes World	
	Championship	Virgin
TBA	The Guardian	Cryo
TBA	TOCA Touring Car 2	Codemaste
TBA	Tonic Trouble	Ubisoft
TBA	Total Annihilation: Kingdoms	GT
TBA	Ultima Ascension	EA
TBA	Unreal Level Editor	GT
TBA	Uprising 2: Lead & Destroy	Ubisoft
TBA	Warzone 2100	EIDOS
TBA	WCW Nitro	THQ
TBA	Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay
TBA	Gex 64	GT
TBA	Micro Machines 64	Codemaste
TBA	Monaco Grand Prix Racing Sim	Ubisoft
TBA	South Park	Acclaim
TBA	Tonic Trouble	Ubisoft

TBA Championship Manager 3 EIDOS

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IDA	Wai zone z 100	LIDOS	1 · ·
TBA	WCW Nitro	THQ	PC
TBA	Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay	N64
TBA	Gex 64	GT	N64
TBA	Micro Machines 64	Codemasters	N64
TBA	Monaco Grand Prix Racing Sim	Ubisoft	N64
TBA	South Park	Acclaim	N64
TBA	Tonic Trouble	Ubisoft	N64
TBA	Asterix	Infogrames	CGB
-e	oruary		
5th	Rollcage	Psygnosis	PSX
12th	Pro 18: World Tour Golf	Psygnosis	PSX
12th	Half-Life: Team Fortress	Sierra	PC
12th	Starsiege Tribes	Cendant	PC
■ RELEA	SE SCHEDULE IN ASSOCIATION WITH HMV	AH	۷V

Most wanted Write and tell us what you're looking forward to playing in '99



Driver Reflections

PlayStation/PC

From the team that brought you the sublime arcade-racing thrills of Destruction Derby 2, this driving game marries the cop-dodging missions of Grand Theft Auto with ultra-realistic car mechanics. I can't wait!"

Gary Lamb, Oldham



Point Blank 2

Brøderbund

Codemasters

Namco, PSX
■ "The original light-gun extravaganza had me blasting until my eyes packed up. The news of a sequel, complete with an eight-player party mode, has forced me to delete
"Get more sleep" from my
list of New Year's Greg Jones, via email

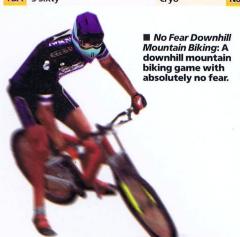


Duke Nukem: Zero Hour

GT Interactive, N64 "I like my games in bad taste and Duke's just the guy to deliver what I guy to deliver what I want. Featuring a *Tomb-Raider-*style third-person view and loads of things to kill my N64's slot is moistening with anticipation already." *Mark Smart, Edinburgh*

Ma	rch		
12th	Duke Nukem: Zero Hour	GT	N64
12th	Bugs Bunny: Crazy Castles 3	Nintendo	CGB
12th		Viacom	CGB
ТВА	Alien Resurrection	EA/Fox	PSX
TBA	Driver	TBA	PSX
TBA	Quake II	Activision	PSX
TBA	Rainbow Six	Take 2	PSX
TBA	Rayman 2	Ubisoft	PSX
TBA	R4: Ridge Racer Type 4	Namco	PSX
TBA	Unification	Telstar	PSX
TBA	Age of Empires 2: Age of Kings	Microsoft	PC
TBA	Close Combat 3	Microsoft	PC
TBA	Flyers	Take 2	PC
TBA	Heroes of Might & Magic III	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Indiana Jones and the		
	Infernal Machine	LucasArts	PC
TBA	Interstate '82	Activision	PC
TBA	Jack Nicklaus: Golden		
	Bear Challenge	Accolade	PC
TBA	Jimmy White 2 – Cue Ball	Infogrames	PC
TBA	Joe Blow	Telstar	PC
TBA	MechWarrior 3	MicroProse	PC
TBA	ODT	Psygnosis	PC
TBA	Prey	GT	PC
TBA	Prince of Persia 3D	Brøderbund	PC
TBA	Rayman 2	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Requiem	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Slave Zero	Accolade	PC
TBA	Solar	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Star Trek: Birth of		
	the Federation	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Third World	Activision	PC
TBA	Ultima Online: Second Age	Origin	PC
A STATE OF THE PARTY OF THE PAR	FIFA 99	EA	N64
TBA	Quake II	Activision	N64
TBA	Rayman 2	Ubisoft	N64
TBA	Three Lions	Take 2	CGB
	Commence of the Commence of th		- Spinned

23	Gabriel Knight Anthology	Cendant	PC
TBA	Prince Naseem Boxing	Codemasters	PSX
TBA	X-Files The Game	Fox Interactive	PSX
TBA	X-Men	Activision	PSX
TBA	3 Sixty	Cryo	PSX
TBA	3 Sixty	Cryo	PC
TBA	Beneath	Activision	PC
TBA	Black & White	EA	PC
TBA	Legend of the Black Moon	Cryo	PC
TBA	Black Moon Chronicles	Cryo	PC
TBA	D Jump	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Descent 3	Interplay	PC
ТВА	Giants	Interplay	PC
TBA	Kanaan	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Battlezone 2	Activision	PC
TBA	Republic	Cryo	PC
ТВА	Return Fire 2	Ripcord	PC
TBA	Shadowman	Acclaim	PC
TBA	3 Sixty	Crvo	N64





Whatever you want to know about - even if that does include submarines - Mark Green is here to help.







■ Resident Evil, Treasures of the Deep and a Jet Set Willy correction for all you pedants out there...

I have a question for you. Will Resident Evil 2 ever come out on the PC? Jason Short, Birmingham

It's your lucky day. Glance across at the Release Schedule and you'll notice that Capcom's zombie fest is due for release on the PC in March. The conversion, to be published by Virgin, will feature a super-difficult Extreme Battle bonus mode, and a Gallery section, with pictures and sketches from the game's development.

Why are there no good submarine games for the PlayStation? The PC is swimming in 'em.

Russ Williams, Rotherham

Nice horns.

'Thanks".

Yes, in their haste to bring you classics such as R4 and Metal Gear Solid, developers for the PlayStation have callously ignored the mainstream demand for underwater tin-can epics. Lucky for you, then, that Namco has tapped into the public psyche and released Treasures of the Deep, which offers limited but varied fun as you guide your little underwater pod to find treasure and rescue scientists. True, the vehicle isn't actually a submarine. but it's close enough for me not to care. If that doesn't tickle your fancy, try that odd submarine sub-game (no pun intended) in Final Fantasy VII. Apart from that, you're buggered. The perfect opportunity to go out and do something more interesting instead, I would have thought.

Why, in issue one's Q&A, did you write "don't hold you breath for Jet Set Willy 2?" Jet Set Willy 2 already exists, it came out for the Spectrum in yadda, yadda, etc. Nicky Adams, Middlesex and many others

Yes, thanks. I'll attempt to get round this using the excuse that Matthew Smith didn't program Jet Set Willy 2, so I meant "don't hold your breath for a proper Smith-written sequel to JSW". Congrats to those people who noticed the "mistake". By the way, nit-pickers, the A-list entry for Triple Play '99 on the PC said that EA had done "a fine job of translating it for the PSX". But don't write in, because I've already changed it. Ha!

Whatever happened to...? | Superstars of gaming's past tracked down

Jaquar and the Atari

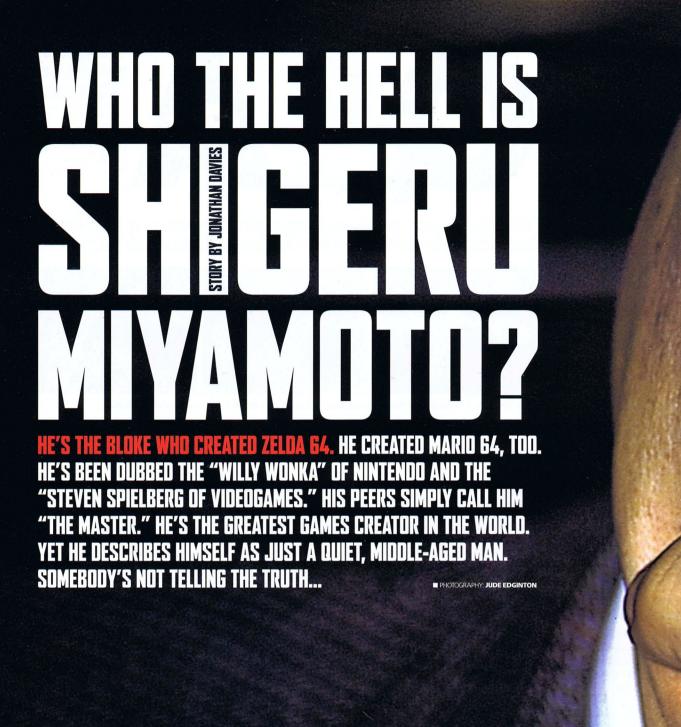


itself, Jeff disappeared as quickly as he'd arrived

■ So, where is he? Working as part of the VM Labs team, now dedicated to bringing the Nuon console to the masses. (We know you haven't heard of it, but that'll be rectified soon.) The Nuon is games-playing circuitry wired inside a DVD player, giving immediate access to games. Jeff's excited about it. "Imagine that for a couple of years all the VCRs that have been made have a [Nuon] chip. So it kind of sneaks into people's houses."

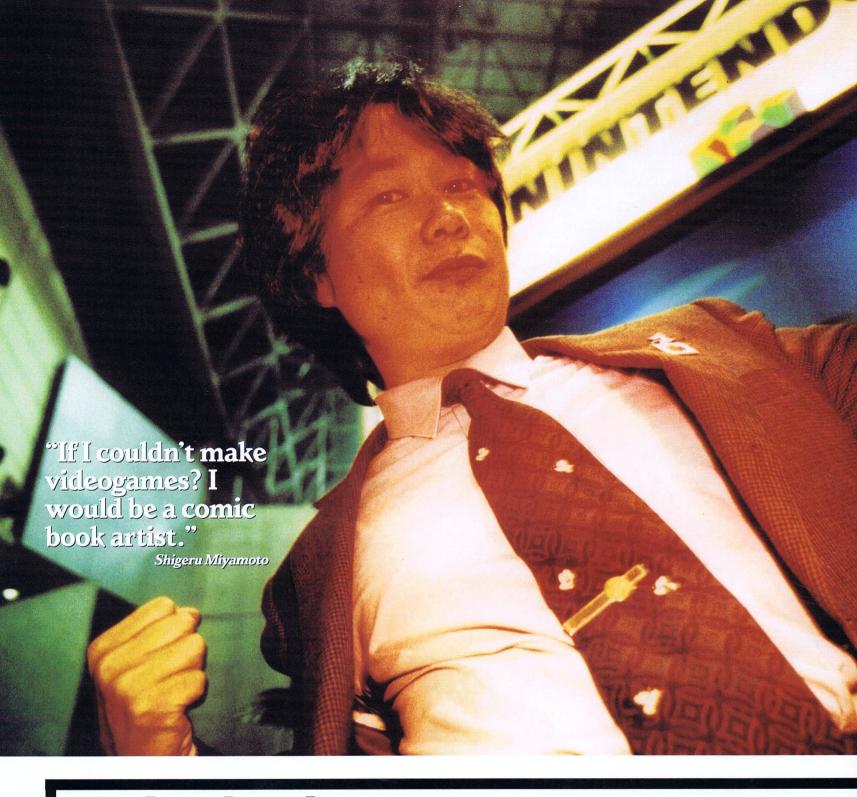
Jeff is also working on software for the machine, including a soundto-light generator and the eagerlyanticipated Tempest 3000. If you want to find out how he's getting on, or take a gander at his assorted farmyard animals, you can visit his Web site (http://www.magicnet.net/yak /gnus.htm). Remember, he might be weird, but then all geniuses are.

■ Thanks to PC Format.



■ Zelda 64 is the greatest videogame of all time. And that's official. It's in shops now.





45 classic Miyamoto Moments...

Miyamoto's output reads like a "Videogaming's Greatest Hits" compilation. The following list isn't comprehensive (there are no Game & Watch or Virtual Boy titles) but there's more than enough to make his rivals weep.

(1) Donkey Kong ■ Arcade ■ 1981

■ Miyamoto wanted to name this game after its "stubborn monkey" villain. One of his favourite films is King Kong, and Nintendo's Japanese-to-English dictionary (subsequently thrown away and replaced) suggested "donkey" as a translation of "stubborn". Hence the name. The game was a true original (boy meets girl, girl is snatched by gorilla, gorilla throws barrels at boy) and owed nothing

to anything else in the arcades of the day. Of all Miyamoto's characters, his favourite remains Donkey Kong. The expression on the hairy fella's face when you topple his tower is classic Shigs. *****

(2) Donkey Kong Jr Arcade 1982

■ One year old and Mario had already gone off the rails. He'd locked Kong in a cage and it was up to Kong Jr to rescue his dad.

Introduced rope-climbing

and, strangely, Bach to the arcades. $\star\star\star\star\star$

(3) Mario Bros.

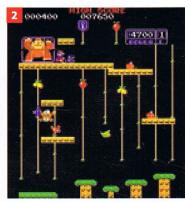
■ Arcade ■ 1983

■ Screen-by-screen platformer that spawned a trillion imitations. ★★★★

(4) Donkey Kong 3 ■ Arcade ■ 1983

■ Er, a case of squirting Donkey Kong up the bottom with an insect spray, while trying to prevent bugs from stealing your flowers. No, honestly. ★★★







f you've ever been shot up the bum by a Red Shell, or landed on by a Koopa Paratrooper, or stalked by a Boo, or inhaled by Andross, or had your rear set on fire while taking a stroll as a small Italian plumber, you'll have done two things: first, you'll have said, "Bother!" (or

possibly "Confound it!"). Second, after calming down a bit, you'll have raised a toast to the genius of Nintendo - and, if you pay attention to the credits at the ends of your games - to the genius of Mr Shigeru Miyamoto. But who exactly is this man? And where did he come from?

In 1977, Shigeru Miyamoto was a 24-year old student studying industrial design at Kanazawa Municipal Arts and Crafts College in

By 1998, Shigeru Miyamoto had sold a quarter of a billion game cartridges across the globe and made Nintendo the most successful videogames company in the world.

His first console game. Super Mario Bros, sold over 50 million copies world-wide. By comparison, the best-selling album of all time. Michael Jackson's Thriller, sold around 47 million copies. Even before a single review had been published. Mivamoto's latest game. Zelda 64, had taken more than 325,000 orders in America - with cash deposits. Zelda 64 was easily the biggest-selling videogame of 1998 in the United States, despite only having being on sale for the final 39 days of the year.

Miyamoto has won admirers among the most powerful men in the entertainment industry. George Lucas, Steven Spielberg and Paul McCartney have all made pilgrimages to Kyoto to meet him. Robin Williams named his daughter Zelda after having been so

enchanted by Miyamoto's NES game. In 1996, Time magazine ran an article about him titled "The Spielberg of Video Games". He's universally admired within the games industry, too. There's not a designer in the world who wouldn't playfully ruffle his hair given the chance. Doom and Quake designer, John Romero, named the star of his latest game (Daikatana), Hiro Miyamoto, after - you guessed it his hero, Shigeru Miyamoto.

Without Miyamoto we'd most likely have no Nintendo. At the end of the 1970s his Donkey Kong and Mario games revived the flagging, two-bit toy company and set it on the



Paul McCartney and Steven Spielberg have both made pilgrimages to meet him.

path to greatness. Without Nintendo we'd probably have no Sega nor PlayStation as it was Nintendo that single-handedly ignited the console boom in the mid-1980s. And without Sega and the PlayStation we'd, er... well, it would be awful.

In short, Shigeru Miyamoto is a star. He's created so many fantastic games that it's virtually impossible to pick a favourite. Go on - what's yours? Super Mario 64, surely? What about Super Mario Bros 3? No. no. Zelda on the SNES? No. Mario Kart? Starfox? F-Zero?

It's just not a fair question. While putting together this article we asked a variety of game designers to name their favourite moments from their favourite Miyamoto games. Most tied themselves up in knots trying to decide on an answer. Every Miyamoto title has raised the gaming stakes. With Donkey Kong he invented not just the platform











(5) Super Mario **Bros**

■ NES ■ 1985

■ This was the game that kicked down your front door and thrust Nintendo into your life. Starring not only Mario but the upgradable Super Mario, it set the template for the biggest-selling game of all time (Super Mario Bros 3) and the best game of all time (Super Mario 64). It sold over 50 million, despite every world ending with Toad saving "Thank you Mario! But our princess is in another castle!" ***

(6) Donkey Kong ■ NES ■ 1985

■ Donkey Kong – but on the NES. There's nothing more to say. ****

(7) Donkey Kong Jr ■ NES ■ 1986

■ Donkey Kong Jr - but on the NES. **

(8) Donkey Kong 3 ■ NES ■ 1986

■ Donkey Kong 3 - but on the NES. ***

(9) The Legend of Zelda

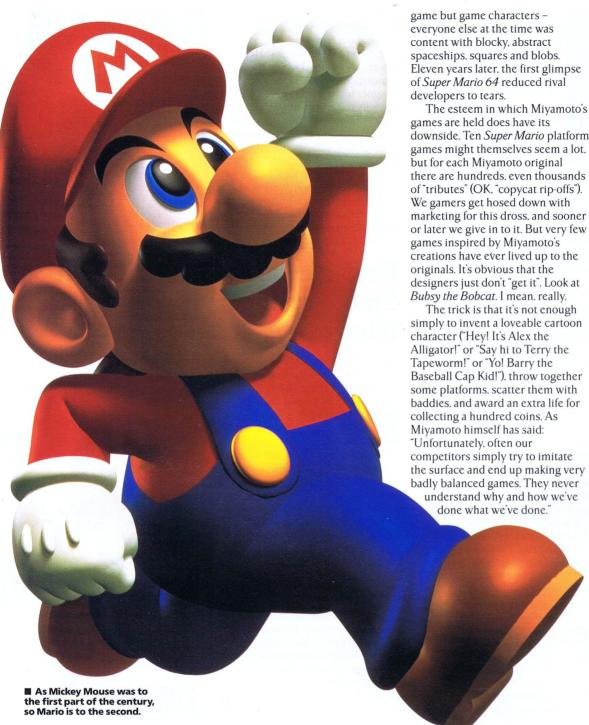
■ NES ■ 1986

Action, adventure, treasure, monsters, secret caves, sword-fighting. bombs... Of all Mivamoto's games, the original Zelda has probably aged most visibly, but it's still great to play, and very tough. There'd been role-playing games before, but Zelda made them accessible and fun. ****

(10) Super Mario Bros 2

■ NES ■ 1988

■ With its curious "silent movie" presentation, and temporary abandonment of Mario gameplay conventions (such as the collect-100-coins-for-anextra-life idea) this was a bit of a cul-de-sac off of the Super Mario highway. Erm, or something. It was released only for the American market and, in essence, was a conversion of a Japanese game called Doki Doki Panic. The twist was that all of the original characters were replaced by the Mario clan. None the worse for that, though you could play as Mario, Luigi, Princess or, superbly, Toad. ****



downside. Ten Super Mario platform games might themselves seem a lot, there are hundreds, even thousands of "tributes" (OK, "copycat rip-offs"). marketing for this dross, and sooner or later we give in to it. But very few designers just don't "get it". Look at

simply to invent a loveable cartoon Baseball Cap Kid!"), throw together baddies, and award an extra life for the surface and end up making very Some designers, however, do bother looking beneath the surface. And what they find is a rich source of gaming wisdom. The best designers do understand "why and how" and. rather than simply trying to make something that looks like a Mario game, they'll make their own game using their own ideas but making sure it meets the standards established by Miyamoto. Indeed, sometimes you'll see Miyamoto's influence springing up in games that couldn't be further removed from the cheery world of Bowser and Yoshi.

"We were playing a great deal of Super Mario 64 when we were designing Half-Life," says Gabe Newell of Valve, "and it affected some of our decisions, probably both consciously and unconsciously. We spent a lot of time trying to figure out how he and his team were able to build spaces that were fun for a wide range of player abilities, as well as his approaches to both the physical navigation of the space and the logical resolution of the puzzles. Of course, the way we do long jumping in Half-Life is exactly the same as the long jumping in Mario 64."

he Miyamoto influence can also be felt in, of all places. Doom. "Even though we both have a different style, the basics are still there," says John Romero. "The importance of a simple user interface for gameplay. allowing lots of exploration in your environments, proper feedback for all actions and outcomes... I've learned the low-level, fundamental things from playing Miyamoto's games over the years."

For all the success of Miyamoto's games, though, it's only through playing those games that we really know him. We don't know much about the man himself. He appears at press conferences from time to time, and eagerly answers questions about his games - fielding kicks from his

Miyamoto Moments (continued)

(11)Zelda II: The **Adventure of Link** ■ NES ■ 1988

A similar departure as Bros 2. Same theme as the first Zelda, and just as enjoyable, but with a curious blend of bird's-eve and from-the-side views. We think perhaps The Shigster™ may have been going through a funny patch - possibly playing too much banjo.

(12) Donkey Kong Classics ■ NES ■ 1989

■ Donkey Kong and Donkey Kong Jr crammed into one cart. Hopefully we'll see more like this from Nintendo. ★★★★★

(13) Super Mario Land

■ Game Boy ■ 1989

■ Mario in pocket form. It's the same formula that made the NES Bros games such winners, although, on the Game Boy's tiny, blurprone screen, fearsomely tricky. ***

(14) Metroid ■ NES ■ 1989

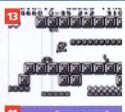
Who says Nintendo only does cute? This gritty, hardedged (well, firm-edged) space shoot-'em-up, seemingly stars a naked man who can roll up into a ball at the press of a button. He even has a gun. Metroid sank in Japan, where it was only released on floppy disk, but was huge elsewhere. Especially when it was discovered that "he" was, in fact, a "she." ****

(15) Super Mario **Bros 3**

■ NES ■ 1990

■ The best-selling videogame of all time, and the true sequel to the original Bros. Miyamoto had spent five years dreaming up amazing new ideas to flesh out the Super Mario story. There's a superb map for each world, enabling you to revisit each level. The levels are stuffed with secret tunnels and bonus games. There's the raccoon tail, allowing Mario to glide incredible distances. There









PR manager when he starts revealing too much. He's got a sort of floppy Beatles' haircut. He wears a suit (with a *Starfox* tie if he's feeling a bit racy). He's always incredibly polite and nice to people who meet him. He works long hours at Nintendo, and then cycles home to play *Mario Kart 64* with his two kids.

What he doesn't do is behave like the superstar he could claim to be. There are no interviews in glossy magazines with pictures of him stripped down to the waist, staring at us through sunglasses. There's no sleeping in oxygen tents with monkeys, no saving the rain forests, no drug-fuelled poolside parties. He's happy to stick with "Mr Miyamoto" – no abbreviating it to "Shigeru", or "The game designer formally known as..." There's no body piercing, no books full of naked photos of himself, no nose job.

Or maybe there is. You see, we just don't know.

One of Shigeru Miyamoto's biggest fans is Alex Garden, boss of Relic, the company currently putting the finishing touches to *Homeworld* for the PC. But Alex finds Miyamoto as mysterious as the rest of us do.

That, he reckons, is part of the appeal. "He's an enigma in the North American and European videogaming press." Alex says, "We know so much about his games, but we know very little about the man himself. This is unusual when we're used to having widespread media coverage of our famous icons, and we're naturally curious."

Too right we are. So, in a *Citizen Kane*-like manner, let's examine the evidence and from what we can collect together, try to develop a set of theories that seek to explain how Miyamoto ticks. Maybe there'll be some truth in them, maybe every one will be wrong. We can only try to separate the reality from the myth.

How then, did Miyamoto become the world's best game designer?

THEORY 1 : SHIGERU MIYAMOTO IS a game character

o. really. When asked where he gets his ideas from. Miyamoto describes a childhood spent exploring the Kansai countryside around his home. He says he enjoyed chancing upon "secret" caves and hidden pathways through the woods. Much the same, in fact, as Mario's outings.

If you've played Duke Nukem 3D or Half-Life on the PC, you'll have had hours of fun attaching lasertripped bombs at ankle-height across doorways and then running around the corner to await the results. Miyamoto was doing similar things 30 years ago. "I used to set traps on the door to my room when I left for school," he explained to one interviewer. "My mother was always surprised by them when she opened the door." Bet she was. Still, a small boy can be forgiven for harbouring game-character fantasies. At least Miyamoto's grown up and moved on now. Hasn't he?

"When I visit a new town. I like to walk alone at night, exploring the back streets and hidden places," he said recently. "Only when I know my way around a little will I buy a map." Zelda veterans will note that Link only finds the dungeon maps after he's spent some time exploring.

"I'm a quiet, middle-aged man." Miyamoto assures the world – but not entirely convincingly.

THEORY 2 : HE'S NOT - IT'S ALL A BIG ACCIDENT

ack in 1977. Miyamoto was invited for an interview at Nintendo not because he'd dazzled them with his gamedesigning prowess, or knocked them out with the "hobbies" section of his CV (banjo-

playing and setting traps for Mrs

Miyamoto), but because his dad was mates with the company's president. Hiroshi Yamauchi.

What are the odds of that? What if Old Man Miyamoto had faced the president of Nissan across the *Go* table, or shared a hot tub with the CEO of Pokari Sweat Beverages? How come *our* dad's don't know the president of Nintendo?

After a chat with Yamauchi. Miyamoto was offered the post of company artist. Nintendo didn't particularly need a company artist. but Miyamoto fell into the position anyway. Then, in 1980 with Nintendo's coin-op business struggling. Yamauchi picked Miyamoto, seemingly at random, and paired him up with a hardware

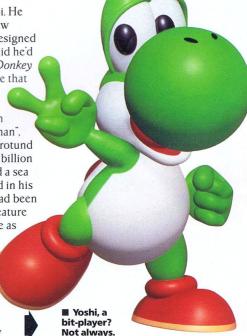


It just never seems to occur to Miyamoto to look at other designers' games.

designer called Gumpei Yokoi. He asked the duo to develop a new game. Miyamoto had never designed a videogame before, but he said he'd give it a stab. The result was *Donkey Kong*, a revolutionary machine that became an immediate hit.

Mario, though. Surely he can be no accident. Born from a Miyamoto sketch as "Jumpman". the hero of *Donkey Kong*. the rotund plumber had chalked up £3.5 billion in sales by 1996, had spawned a sea of merchandise, had appeared in his own TV cartoon series, and had been played by Bob Hoskins in a feature film. A character as distinctive as that doesn't come about by chance. Does he?

"He wears dungarees because that way you can see his arms move." confesses Miyamoto. Back when Mario was designed. graphics technology was very







are dozens of new friends and enemies to meet and techniques to learn. And, best of all, it's absolutely huge.

(16) Dr Mario ■ Game Boy/NES ■ 1990

A puzzly Tetris/Columns variant in which a lab-coated Mario has to rid the screen of scowling viruses. Not immediately "Miyamoto" (it seems all early '90s nowadays) but diverting enough. ****

(17) Super Mario World

■ SNES ■ 1991

■ Three years in the making, this was the game that launched the SNES. It didn't showcase Nintendo's new hardware in the same

way as Super Mario 64 later would, but in practice it proved to be Miyamoto's best yet. After all, you can't knock being able to ride Yoshi around – while wearing a cape. ****

(18) Metroid II: Return of Samus

■ Game Boy ■ 1991 ■ Our naturist chum romps again. ★★★★

(19) Pilotwings ■ SNES ■ 1991

■ The SNES has not six graphics modes but seven. The last allows a background to be displayed in pseudo-3D perspective and Miyamoto isn't afraid to use it. The result is a flight sim with graphics of impossible smoothness and

it's packed with Miyamoto touches (including the allimportant penguins) and one of the games he's proudest of. ****

(20) F-Zero

■ Along with *Pilotwings*, an advert for the SNES's clever graphics, this time using them to whisk futuristic racetracks along beneath your hover car at cheekflapping speed. The most exciting, most knucklegnawing racing this side of Walthamstow. ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

(21) The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past

■ SNES ■ 1992

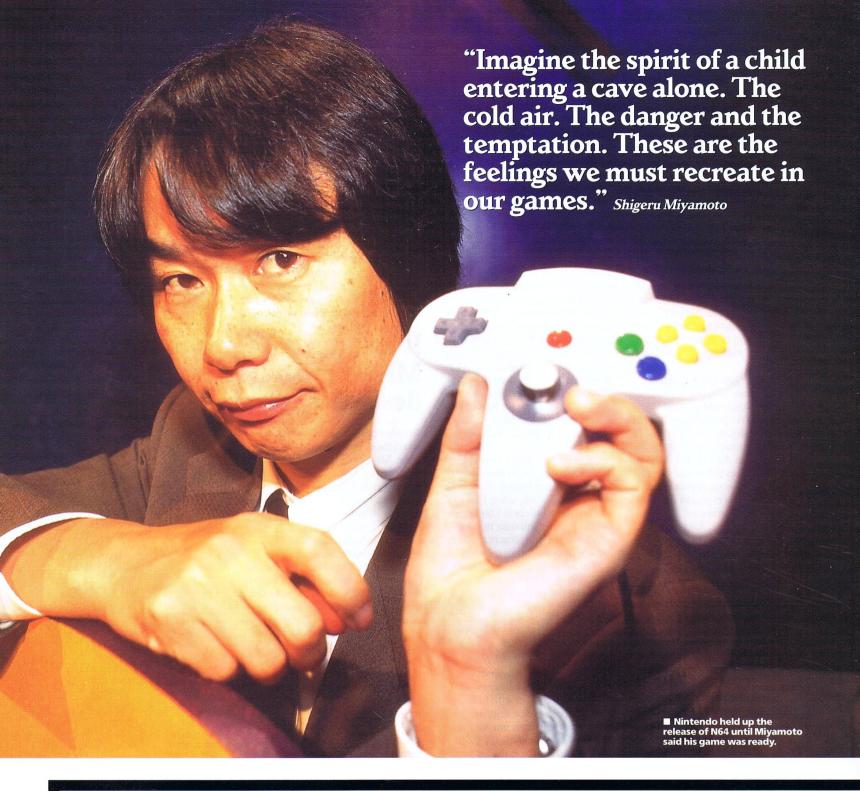
■ The game Zelda fans had waited years for. (Sound

familiar?) A return to the from-above view of the original Zelda, but with delightful, colourful graphics (check out the Castle and the Sanctuary) and a map that you can zoom around in a 3D perspective. With its secret caves and surprise-filled forests, this would appear to be Miyamoto's childhood – but on the SNES.

(22) Super Mario Kart

■ SNES ■ 1992

■ Mario, Princess Daisy, Koopa Trooper and chums as they were meant to be: doing battle with turtle shells and bananas. Preferred by some die-hard fanatics to its 64-bit sequel, not least for the intense



Miyamoto Moments (continued)

two-player battle game (which Matt Bielby always loses).

(23) Super Mario Land 2: 6 Golden Coins

■ Game Boy ■ 1992

■ Almost like being able to pop Super Mario World into your pocket. A bigger, chunkier Mario (something of a relief on the Game Boy's titchy screen), a huge map to explore and secret bits to trip over at every step. Lovely. ★★★★★

(24) Wave Race

■ Game Boy ■ 1992

■ Kind of an *F-Zero* for the Game Boy, with a bird's-eye view of jet-skis racing over

black-and-white surf. Subtle handling and talented computer foes make it a laster.

(25) Yoshi

■ Game Boy/NES ■ 1992

■ Tricky take on the Tetris/Columns motif, where matching a top and a bottom egg-half hatches a Yoshi. It's always good to see the little chap. ★★★

(26) Mario Paint ■ SNES ■ 1992

■ Spend hours creating animated drawings and music, only to see it all vanish when you switch off your SNES. One for the "younger player", let's say. Hopefully the 64DD's *Mario*

Artist suite ought to work better, should Miyamoto ever finish it. ★★★

(27) Super Mario All-Stars

■ SNES ■ 1993

■ A chance for Miyamoto archivists to acquire the first three *Super Mario Bros* games on one SNES cart, with spruced-up graphics. Notable mainly for how little the games had aged in the eight years since the series began. ★★★★

(28) The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening

■ Game Boy ■ 1993

An epic black-and-white quest packed into a cart the



primitive. Game characters were sketched on squared paper before being squeezed into sprites which measured not-very-many pixels by even-fewer pixels. Today you're upset if you can't see the veins bulge on your character's arm when he squeezes the trigger; once players were delighted to make out the arms (or any other limbs) at all.

How about that cap, with its little 'M' logo? Miyamoto reveals its mundane truth: "He wears a hat because his hair would look silly if it remained static when he jumps. Also, I can't do hair styles very well."

But that still leaves the trademark tache, surely a bold pen-stroke in a world still recovering from the Village People. And yet... "His moustache is there because there weren't enough pixels to separate his mouth from his nose."

You see? The most successful game character in the history of everything – more recognisable to American school kids, according to a much-quoted survey of 1990, than Mickey Mouse – and he could have been created by anyone given the right bit of graph paper. Maybe.

THEORY 3 : NINTENDO CENSORS HIS POST

sk Shigeru Miyamoto what games he's playing these days and he'll look slightly mystified. He'll say something like, "Well, I'm playing a lot of Zelda at the moment." No no. you'll say - not for work, for fun. "Er... sometimes I play Mario Kart against my children." No, but what about other people's games? He'll look blank. You'll suggest the latest global chart-topping smash hit. He'll turn to his PR man and confer in Japanese. Then he'll turn back to you and say: "I've not really had a chance to play it. But I like some of the graphics."

He's not being uncharitable, or snobbish, or thick. He genuinely

never seems to have a clue about any games other than Nintendo's.

By contrast, if you'd walked into any games developer's office anywhere in the world in the middle of 1996 you'd have found an N64 set up, and *Super Mario 64* playing on the screen. Coders and designers would have been huddled around watching, some taking notes, others just slowly shaking their heads.

Most Western designers will talk freely about the games they enjoy playing. They might describe their new game as "...the best bits of...", "...a combination of...", "...I always wanted to do a version of..."

Try to describe a Miyamoto game in terms of other people's games, and you'll find it can't be done. *Pilotwings*? That's just a cross between... er... No, but *Mario Kart*. though – that's an update of... um...

It just never seems to occur to Miyamoto even to look at other designers' games, let alone to borrow ideas from them.

Either that or he doesn't know that they exist.

THEORY 4 : HIS SPIES ARE EVERYWHERE

scary hypothesis, but one with a powerful proponent. "Miyamoto knows what you're thinking at every moment." suspects Dave Perry, president of Shiny Entertainment and father of Earthworm Jim. "When you think you're being smart, or you do something unexpected, or even go the wrong way, he's already there with you."

It's true. You probably reckoned you were being pretty clever in Super Mario Bros. breaking your way through the top of the screen and running around among the scores and counters. Then perhaps you started to panic, fearing you wouldn't be able to get back down

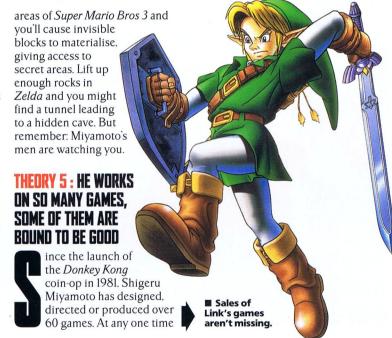
again into the game. But Miyamoto was "there with you", and had provided an escape route further down the level. The omnipresent Miyamoto is thus able not just to anticipate you, but to surprise you. Idly shoot the Mario face carved into the side of the mountain in *Pilotwings 64* and — wahay! — it turns into Wario. See? He just knew that's what you'd do.

"We design games so that the player will try many things apart from the main course." Miyamoto explains. "Hidden secrets can induce him to explore. The player must be thinking. Well. I don't see anything here, but there could be, it's possible. And when he finds something he didn't expect, it's a great satisfaction."

Jump around in seemingly empty



The trick is not simply to invent a loveable character. "Say hi to Terry Tapeworm!"





size of an After Eight.
Hugely entertaining, despite
the crippling cost of the AA
batteries required to finish
the thing. ****

(29) Starfox ■ SNES ■ 1993

■ Hyper-exciting, animal - oriented space combat action that introduced Fox McCloud, Slippy and all their animal pals to the world. As the first cart to include a Super FX 3D chip it also bought 3D polygon graphics to the previously sprite-based SNES. ★★★★

(30) Yoshi's Cookie ■ Game Boy/NES ■ 1993

■ Yoshi fans will be disappointed to see Mario very much wearing the chef's trousers here. ★ ★ ★

(31) Yoshi's Safari ■ SNES ■ 1993

■ Insubstantial vehicle for the Super Scope, Nintendo's all-too-substantial shouldermounted light gun. Worth playing, though, for Yoshi's expression should you inadvertently shoot him in the back of the head. ★★

(32) Donkey Kong Game Boy 1994

■ The Game Boy version of an Atari *Donkey Kong* game. Don't ask. ★★★

(33) Wario Land: Super Mario Land 3 ■ Game Boy ■ 1994

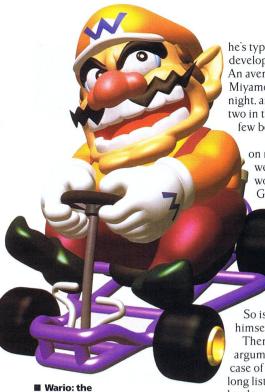
■ Miyamoto's darker side reveals itself again when, as in *Donkey Kong Jr*, you get to play the bad guy. In this case he's Wario, Mario's even tubbier alter ego. He's huge, in fact, filling up a fair proportion of the Game Boy's screen, and lays into the fluffy goodies with aplomb.

(34) Super Metroid ■ SNES ■ 1994

■ One of the most exciting beginnings in videogaming: barely have you pressed Start than you're struggling with a huge boss and then trying to flee from a space station before it selfdestructs, Superbly cinematic, with a dark, Aliens feel - Shigs clearly never had much to do with Metroid. Or maybe he was getting all the anger, hate and loathing out of his system before his next SNES project... ***

(35) Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island

■ SNES ■ 1995 ■ Baby Mario rides on Yoshi's back through a super-happy, drawn-inpastels, Super-FX-propelled world. Our prehistoric pal can lick up baddies and convert them into eggs, to be trailed along behind until they're needed. He can also "pound the ground", and turn into a helicopter or a mole tank. It's fantastic fun, astonishing to look at and is Miyamoto at his most sublime. There are even spoof Sonic and Tetris bits, If Miyamoto was pushing the SNES this hard four years into its life, what will we see on the N64 come the millennium? ***



darker side of

plumbing?

he's typically involved in the development of around ten games. An average working day for Miyamoto finishes at ten o'clock at night, and sometimes he's there until two in the morning (which rings a few bells here at Arcade).

> "If Valve had tried to work on multiple projects while we were shipping Half-Life, we would have imploded," admits Gabe Newell. And if Half-Life

had turned out to be awful, we'd probably never have heard from them again. Miyamoto, though, has games coming out left, right and centre.

So is it any surprise that he finds himself with the odd hit?

There's a slight snag with this argument, though: it's not simply a case of "the odd hit". Looking at the long list of games on his resumé it's hard to find one that's not an out-andout, five-star corker. Mario Paint was a bit of a dead-end, maybe. And you'd have been doing well to have squeezed six minutes' entertainment from Yoshi's Safari. But both were brave experiments and made the best of a couple of dodgy Nintendo add-ons - the SNES Mouse and the hopeless Super Scope.

Ah ha. Everything he's published. Could it be that we never see the crap Miyamoto games? Long before work began on Super Mario 64, for example. Miyamoto began a 3D Mario game using the Super FX chip the device that powered Starfox on the SNES. The game was abandoned. presumably because it didn't work. Many other companies would have

released it anyway, but Nintendo, accruing profits nearing £1 billion a vear at the time, could afford to discard it. How many other failed Miyamoto projects lie cluttering up the basement of Nintendo's Entertainment Analysis and Development lab? Er. probably not that many. Still, eh?

THEORY 6 : MIYAMOTO ACTUALLY **RUNS NINTENDO**

intendo is one of those rare companies that puts the top priority on the developers' voices, not the marketing people's." said Miyamoto in Arcade 1. "So it's fun to work here because I can do what I want to." which is rather understating his position.

In principle, Nintendo is controlled by Hiroshi Yamauchi, a 71-year-old who rarely smiles. Yamauchi inherited control of the company in 1949, oversaw its development from a small maker of playing cards into the world's most successful videogames company, and rules its global operations ruthlessly from the Mother Brain his office in Nintendo's Kyoto HQ.

In practice, however, Yamauchi would be the first to admit that he's not exactly the world's most squareeyed videogame junkie. In fact, the best games-related decision he ever made was to put Shigeru Miyamoto in charge of the games.

That was in 1984, when Miyamoto was appointed head of Nintendo's R&D 4 department, with the responsibility of developing a range of carts for the new Famicom (Family Computer) console - the machine we know as the NES. Since then Miyamoto has had a hand in every single game developed by Nintendo. He wields a power other game designers can only dream of. He's untroubled by the finance and marketing people with their

demographic targets, their fiscal quarters and their focus groups. Miyamoto has earned the right to make the games he wants to play. and make them however he likes. and not even Hiroshi Yamauchi stands in his way. The Nintendo sales department might nervously suggest release dates, but Miyamoto never signs off a game until he's sure it's absolutely spot-on.

This inevitably leads to frustrating delays. The world was kept waiting over a year for Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time. The launch of the N64 was postponed for a year while Miyamoto put the finishing touches to Super Mario 64. This allowed Sony vital breathing space to establish the PlayStation.

But Miyamoto's perfectionism does mean that every Nintendo title is as perfect as a game can be.

The secret of the Super Mario games is that we play and play and play." Miyamoto has said in the past. "The most important factor is making players feel 'comfortable' with a game. It's delicate fine-tuning that can give players the comfort to manipulate their character just as they wish through the hand-held controller. This comfort is achieved by the perfect integration of graphics, sound and playability with perfectly synchronised timing." And by nobody else sticking their nose in.

Hiroshi Yamauchi has announced he'll retire in 2000. His two children have never been involved in Nintendo's management. So there's no obvious heir to the Mother Brain big chair. Or is there?

kay, so enough of all this conspiracy theorising. Let's get back to the known facts. In his 21 years at Nintendo. Miyamoto's devotion to his work has made successes of the NES, the Game Boy, the Super NES and the N64. And, as long as he keeps at it we don't really care how

Looking at his list of games, it's hard to find one that's not an out-and-out, five star corker.

Miyamoto Moments (continued)

(36) Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven

- Other manufacturers had all but abandoned their 16bit consoles by now, but Nintendo's SNES games just got better and better. Mario RPG throws Mario and his band together on a quest to - go on, guess. No? rescue the princess, and also tackle the problem of a magic sword having smashed Bowser's castle and scattered baddies everywhere. ****

(37) Super Mario 64 ■ N64 ■ 1996

■ Everyone can remember the instant they first

glimpsed Mario running around in 3D. With its awe inspiring graphics and delicate control system, Miyamoto had devised a game that made complete sense of the N64's "Reality" co-processor and analogue control stick. It was simultaneously a natural progression from Super Mario World and a completely new type of game. Rival developers wept into their Red Bull while Sony immediately got to work on its own analogue joypad. Nintendo had delayed the N64's launch by a year while Miyamoto finished Super Mario 64. It was worth it. A modern classic. ★★★

(38) Pilotwings 64 ■ N64 ■ 1996

■ "It's great, but you can't shoot things" was a common criticism of the SNES original. Enter Pilotwings 64, with a rocketarmed gyrocopter. As before, the game is essentially a graphical showcase for Nintendo's hardware. This time, however, the landscapes are creamy-smooth and festooned with ultradetailed buildings. Although primarily developed by Paradigm Studios in the US, there are tell-tale Miyamoto fingerprints all over, including stars to collect and secret tunnels through mountains. ***

(39) Wave Race 64 ■ N64 ■ 1996

Having little in common with its Game Boy namesake, this boasts water effects so convincing you'll want to play it within range of the bathroom. **

(40) Mario Kart 64 ■ N64 ■ 1997

■ In multi-player mode this is the best use imaginable for the N64's four controller sockets. Indeed, although Miyamoto rarely takes games home, this is one he plays with his kids. But a short-lived one-player mode and some glitchy, unintentional short-cuts ruin what could have been an all-time classic . ****







or why he does what he does. But for all Mivamoto's quality control, his tweaking and refining, there are signs he's becoming frustrated with the time it takes to get things done at Nintendo, even that he's smelling stale air there. "I feel there's a bad atmosphere where you can't do anything new at Nintendo these days," he recently told Japanese magazine The 64 Dream. "So now we're changing into an organisation that allows people to do new things - we're energising ourselves. I'm telling my people. from now on let's go for games that can be developed in six months and sell a million copies."

And if that doesn't work out? Could the unthinkable happen? Could Miyamoto move on? It's normally unheard of for a game designer to stay with one company for his entire career. Is it possible Mario's dad could go the way of Populous' Peter Molyneux; Quake's John Romero: Tomb Raider's Toby Gard and Paul Douglas? If so. could Nintendo survive without him?

Gabe Newell for one isn't sure it could: "If Microsoft were to say to Mr. Miyamoto, 'Here's \$100 million. Do for the PC what you've been doing for Nintendo systems, and tell us what we need to do to make the PC more friendly to the console market. I think Nintendo would be in a very difficult situation. For me as a gamer, his products are the exclusive reason I have a Nintendo 64 at home."

'Shigeru is Nintendo." concurs John Romero. "I'm just amazed that he's stayed this long and has kept his quality as high as he has. If Shigeru ever leaves, that part of gaming history will become legendary.

But a Miyamoto-goes-solo Bobombshell doesn't seem likely for a while at least. By recognising, rewarding and promoting the talent that has made it successful. Nintendo has instilled an enviable loyalty in its employees - on both

sides of the Pacific. The only notable defection from Nintendo in recent memory has been Game Boy creator Gumpei Yokoi, seemingly a scapegoat for the disastrous Virtual Boy, and even he stuck around as a consultant until his death in 1997.

More than that. Mivamoto needs Nintendo as much as it needs him. He's surrounded by a team of programmers, graphic artists, musicians, level designers, testers, directors and producers who are completely in tune with his ways of thinking and working. And, despite his awesome talents, he is as dependent on them as they so obviously are on him.

And it's just as well, because Miyamoto fans have plenty to look forward to over the months to come. Nintendo has always made a point of supporting machines throughout their life cycles, with games that get better and better as the hardware matures. Just look at Yoshi's Island and Super Mario RPG from the SNES's twilight days.

With the N64 two years old, we can soon expect the first pictures of Super Mario 642. Work's been underway for a while, with Luigi due to return. Jungle Emperor, starring a lion, is due for the middle of 1999. although the development whip has been handed to Yoshi's Story boss Makoto Tezuka.

With faster development in mind, Miyamoto has recently cottoned on to the idea of re-using game engines - an obvious concept to those who've grown up with the Doom and Quake sagas, but a novelty in Japan.

So the team that developed Ocarina of Time is being split in two, with each half setting off to create a game using the Zelda engine. One will be the next in the Zelda series: the other, a totally new game. (Metroid 64? Huh? Maybe?) And then... who knows? Miyamoto no doubt does. A couple of years ago

he was asked how he'd like to see games develop in the future. "I have some background as a comic book artist," he said. "In comics, I can use different layouts on every page. If I could use a similar technique for



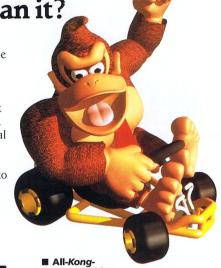
A character as distinctive as Mario can't be an accident. Or can it?

games, it could be very exciting. I'd also like to come up with a new type of game that doesn't require you to sit in front of a television.

Heaven knows what that might mean. But if Miyamoto's involved it should be, as he says, very exciting.

"I think you can pin the sum total of gaming innovation over the last ten years on four people," reckons Alex Garden at Relic. "Mr Miyamoto is without doubt at the top of that very small pile. With some rare exceptions, everything he's produced has raised the quality of gaming to levels most developers just dream of."

No doubt we'd all drink a large Medicine of Life to that.



kering. The king lives on in Miyamoto's head.



■ Just a normal, everyday, epoch-making, creative genius and his haircut.













(41) Starfox 64 ■ N64 ■ 1997

■ This bewitching blend of Independence Day and Star Wars sees Shigs in full effect. "I'm most proud of the cinematic feel of this game, in that the player feels like they are seeing a movie as they play," said Miyamoto at the game's unveiling. And, you know what, he's right. Starfox 64 is much better than the spooled-off-CD 'interactive movies" of yore and moves seamlessly from player-controlled action to story-telling scenes, all in the same 3D graphics. It will live forever, it's so lovely. Starfox 64 was also the first game to be accompanied by the Rumble Pak: again, an imitation from Sony swiftly followed. ****

(42) Yoshi's Story ■ N64 ■ 1998

■ "We're getting there," sing the Yoshis, in Japanese, in the captivating betweenlevels song. "Still a way to go, but we're getting happier. Still some way to go to the Super Happy Tree." Maybe you have to hear it for yourself. Anyway, this is a lovely attempt to prove that 2D's not dead yet, albeit another "hands off" game for Miyamoto he passed the reins to Makoto Tezuka in order to wrestle Zelda 64 back under control. ***

(43) 1080 Snowboarding ■ N64 ■ 1998

■ Wave Race 64, only colder. ****

(44) F-Zero X ■ N64 ■ 1998

■ Much-anticipated sequel to the SNES "Mivamotoring" classic. Spurning the florid scenery favoured by other developers, our hero went all out for speed with this one - in keeping with his philosophy that it's how it plays that matters most. Another four-player special,

(45) The Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time

■ N64 ■ 1998

■ Quite simply the best videogame ever made. We all love it, and recommend that you beg, borrow or steal an N64 to play Miyamoto's magnum



BECOME A DEMON GAME PLAYER OVERNIGHT

SOUTH PACIFIC SEAND

Lara gets to shoot up the South Pacific.



COASTAL VILLAGE

s your suntan lotion applied? Sunglasses on? Well take 'em off – you start this level

underwater. Immediately turn right and swim into the area there. In the middle is a block of what looks like concrete - this block has the Smuggler's Key on it. Pick up the key. Swim back out towards the entrance. Almost directly opposite you, slightly hidden, is a place where you can get out of the water. Do so. Jump up one block and get the small medikit. Then dive back into the water. Now swim over to the sand banks that are by the waterfalls. Climb out of the water and head over to the beach with palm trees along it.

From the waterfall end there's a progression of thin palm tree, fat palm tree, thin palm tree. At the last one there's an entrance to an alternative route that takes you down a slide. If you don't want to take this route jump to point (A) on page 77.

Slide down, run across the pool and jump up on the far side to the left. You'll find yourself in a hidden valley. Ready your weapons and jog along, dealing with the native on the way. Just where he pops out from you'll see a small rock outcrop that's your launch pad to the big rock sitting in the middle of a lethal **mud pool** Long-jump (and grab) over to it, but be careful when you climb up – there's an **arrow trap**

here. You're safe anywhere except in the middle of this block. Over to your right there's a large medikit a long-jump away. Get it and return to the block in the middle. Now long-jump to the other side of the mud pool and into the forest. In the clearing you'll meet another native – dispose of him.

Turn around and look back the way you came. You can see an easy climb up to the right of a tree. Climb up, forward and then left and climb up through the foliage. Turn around and short-jump to the branch. Head left and jump on to the ledge. You will see another ledge with shotgun shells. Go get.

Make your way carefully back the way you came, but go on instead of dropping down through the foliage. On the other side of the tree is another branch. Jump over to it. Go to the end, long-jump and grab and collect the red crystal (Serpent Stone) on this branch. Turn around and you'll notice a partially obscured ledge at the end of the branch.

Climb up for some **Desert Eagle clips**. Back to the branch and use the slide to your right to get down. Go to the far edge of the clearing and short-jump across to the waterfall. Drop into the water and you'll be washed across, ending up on a ledge.

A savegame crystal is a couple of long-jumps away. Go and get it. Return via the obvious path to the ledge below the waterfall again.

Look closely to discover an entrance-way either side of the waterfall at your level. Jump through the 'fall and collect the second **Serpent Stone**

Back out on to the ledge, jump the other way and grab the ladder. Climb up to the top, drop off left, follow the passage and climb up the next ladder. As you emerge there's a big rock to your right with a small medikit on it. You'll see a cave entrance high up to the left of the waterfall. Go to the right of the entrance and climb up. Left and short-jump and grab.

KICK ASS AT...

Format: PC and PlayStation | Publisher: EIDOS Interactive | Developer: Core | Price: £39.99 | Players: 1 | ★★★★ | Words by: Steve Farragher

WELCOME TO KICK ASS

TOMR FLAILER

Edited by | Rich Pelley

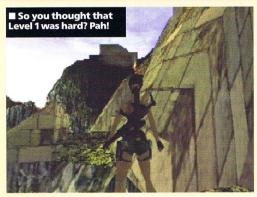
limey. There's so much to fit in to this month's Kick Ass that I've been squashed up into this tiny little box with not even enough room to say "Welcome to Kick Ass. This month we have a 17-page solution to Tomb Raider III (minus the first level, but hey! You've probably done that by yourself already), a game that is crying out for a solution like no other game since Tomb Raider and Tomb Raider II." I'll give it a go, but I'm sure space is too tight. [Clears throat]. Welcome to Kick Ass. This month we have a 16-page solution to Tomb Raider III (minus the first level, but hey! You've probably done that by yourself already), a game that... see, out of room. On with the tips...

ALSO TIPPED THIS MONTH

PLAYSTATION

P93 TENCHU P93 SPYRO THE DRAGON

34 TUROK 2



Pull yourself up and deal with the native guard. Don't go in the cave yet. Turn around and long-jump back the way you came. From this new, higher ledge turn right and long-jump. Jump to the right again and pick up the third Serpent Stone

Work your way back to the cave entrance and use the three Serpent Stones to open the three gates. Slide down the passageway and out into a village clearing. Shoot the native and then hug the left wall until you come across a small medikit. Drop down the slope into the main clearing. You're now at Point (B) in the solution for this level (see left).

Point (A)

If you decide against the Serpent Stone route, turn around and look at the water. Notice that single block of stone sticking up out of it? There's a small medikit on top of that. Go get it.

At the far end of the lagoon, you should see a wooden palisade. Run over, climb up to it and into the room with a fire burning in the middle. At the far end is the Smuggler's Keyhole

Use your key, and a trapdoor will open behind you. Lower yourself in and pick up the savegame crystal. It's probably best to use it, too. Go down the corridor that leads off. As soon as you drop down, start crawling; there's a set of spikes about to spring out.

Follow the corridor right.

As you come out towards the underground lake, have your guns ready - someone's firing poison darts at you.

When they're dead, there're two crocodiles in the lake. Shoot them both before you go any further.

Rather than dive in the water, take the long-jump straight in front of you. Then a short-jump over another watery gap and climb up the block in front of you.

Jump up from here and grab the **vines** on the ceiling. Use them to traverse the water. Drop down on the other side of the lake. Turn right, shortjump to another block of rock, then run up the pathway. At the end turn left and haul up. Haul up again. You're on a ledge with two exits.

If you turn around where you came up, there's a longjump over to the other side, but before you do that, go to the other end of the ledge and jump and climb into the justvisible crawl space where you'll find yourself some MP5 dips.

Jump backwards on to the ledge then go for that longjump. Go forward, jump up and catch hold of the vines again. Head off to your right.

When you can go no further, drop down. You'll find yourself on a bridge (the blowdart man was up here). Cross over to the other side and jump left at the end, down on to a long slide. Just before the end of the slide jump forward.

You'll find yourself on a little path that leads round to a

ladder. Careful though, there's another blow-darter way up above you. Having dealt with him, jump on to the ladder.

Make sure it's a long-jump or you'll land on those spikes below it. Go up the ladder there's a big medikit to your right. Then drop off the ledge backwards, catch hold and traverse left. Pull yourself up as soon as you can and take the regame crystal and the small medikit as your reward Then just run off the far end of that ledge; don't worry, you'll land on a single block.

Fall off backwards, but hang on and traverse left, pulling yourself up on the other side. Turn left and jump on to another block. Turn right and go down the passageway follow it along until you come out into the open air on a rope bridge. Run straight over, pulling out your guns as you go; there's a nasty native waiting for you.

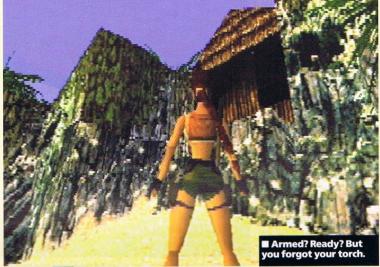
The path forks here: right's a dead-end. You should be wary of the left too - as soon as you step round it you'll trigger a trap that shoots spinning, razor-sharp discs; a native'll appear behind you.

Get on your hands and knees and crawl under the discs. You'll come into a huge room with two big windows, a waterfall and a clearly visible ame crystal with a moat between you and it.

Just this side of the moat is a large medikit. Don't be easily tempted by the crystal or medikit - like most visible things in TRIII, they hide traps.

As soon as you step near the middle of the room it's time for the old poisonarrow trap nonsense. Run around to your right instead, where there's a switch set against the wall that will close the nearest window and turn off the trap. Then go and get the medikit and jump over the water, Don't fall in though you'll get swept away (though if you do don't worry, you're in the Serpent Stone route, as described on the left).

Crawl carefully toward the



me crystal - there's an arrow trap here, too. Drop down the clearly visible hole, drawing your weapons as you go down the slide. You'll come out into the native village. Be careful, there are lots of enemies here. One comes at you straight away.

Point (B)

Follow the path - taking care of the blow-dart man high to your left - until it forks (the first hut has a rocket in it, the second is empty). Take the left fork, another blow-darter pops out immediately. When you've disposed of him, keep going you'll come out by a big tree with a tree-house on top. There's another native lurking here - kill him.

Keep going round until you're facing a mud pool watch out, this is deadly quicksand. Turn left and climb up the first rock (you'll be able to hear someone walking about, he's the other side of

the rock) lump on to the next rock and shoot him.

Drop down to where he was patrolling and use the wheel You'll see a closing trapdoor. Go back to the clearing with the treehouse (watch out though, there's another native lurking).

At this point you may hear someone shouting to you. lanore them for the moment. Turn around and head back to the village. Careful though there's yet another native on his way over to you.

Follow the other fork in the path which takes you into the village proper - two natives wait for you here. Deal with them and then go into the first hut to pick up a small medikit. Come out and go straight across the clearing to pick up the savegame

Then come back out into the clearing and left past the final hut. There's a large medikit in there, but there's also quicksand in front of it, so forget about it.

Keep going round the hut and follow the path to the right. Before you go over the trapdoor you closed earlier with the wheel, jump up to the ledge above it and pick up the shotgun shells

Come down, go over the trapdoor and into another clearing. There's an empty hut to your right with an open doorway. Run around to the right of the hut, follow the path down and then turn right for a secret area.

Careful there's a native in here. Pick up the MP5 clips and the shotgun shells. Run back out and head straight forward, past the back of the hut and into the doorway of the next hut where you'll find some flares.

Keep looking out for natives who'll suddenly appear.

Come out of the hut, turn left and jump up to the ledge. Ignore the big hut at the far right - it's empty. Go left, turn right and by the tree is the entrance to the next hut along which has a wheel in it. Turn it and expect to be immediately jumped by an enemy. Come back out to the right and drop down into the clearing. Turn around and climb up the ladder. Get off to the left at the first landing. A window will obligingly open. Go through it and jump to the left on to the platform there (you'll have to grab and haul). Now be very, very careful. You can see a passageway with a fire to the left. To the right is a hidden



native who will push you on to the flames. Draw your best weapons (a shotgun should do), run in and immediately jump backwards while firing.

When he's dead go in and right, down to the end, right again and jump on to the back of the first hut's roof. Head forwards and jump on to the second roof. Immediately to your left are **harpoons**, hidden in the cave's recesses. Pick 'em up, head back out and go round to the left along the wooden walkway to the end.

Turn right, walk and jump to the top of the hut roof. Jump and grab the vine. Hang tough along the vine's pathway – straight on, then right, then left. When you've gone as far as you can, drop on to the hut where you found the flares.

A running jump takes you on to the roof of the empty hut that was first on the right when you entered this clearing.

Go down to the right and into the treehouse. Light a flare. At the far side is a **switch** that activates a gate above the flames on the other side of the clearing, making them safe. When you trigger it, a teleporting native will attack.

Go back to the flames (drop down on to the floor of the clearing and go up the ladder again, this time getting off to the right). Jump on to the grille above the flames and make sure to jump forwards off the far end of it. There's a switch at the end – prepare to be ambushed again, and hit it.

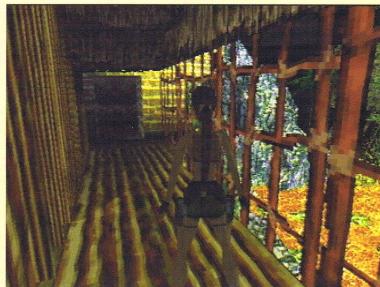
Once you've dealt with the murderous native, turn around. Ignore the switch to the right; it turns on fatal flames beneath you. Go left and, keeping hard against the left wall, dash past the wheels. Go to the end of the corridor, turn the wheel and then slide backwards down the subsequently opened doorway to your left, grabbing and releasing at the end to avoid fall damage. Head into the water on the far side of the clearing and you'll find an open gateway. Swim past the crocodile that patrols this underwater passage.

Go to the end, haul out and climb the ladder in front of you. Follow the passage round, head across the rope bridge, right and short-jump on to the treehouse from the end of the ledge. And that's it – you've survived. Level done.

treenouse from the end of the ledge. And that's it – you've survived. Level done.

■ The tourist isn't made very welcome in this village.

■ In this case, "crash site" doesn't refer to a nice place to have a kip after your tropical picnic lunch.





CRASH SITE

ou're in the tree house. The way you came in is blocked. Get down to the ground level. Any attempt to run back down the ravine with the rope bridge above it will result in you being crushed by falling rocks. You can't go back, the only way is forward across the mud pool. To do this you'll have to jump across the lily pads, but only some of them are safe. Refer to the Swamp Map in your inventory for details or follow these instructions. Down to the edge of the pool and a short-jump to the lily pad on your left. Then make a long-jump to the farthest left of the available four pads. Jump to the sand between two sloping rocks.

Turn round and long-jump to the **farthest lily** on the left and haul up. Then long-jump to the one that's ahead and slightly left from here. Turn towards the jungle path on the

far side and long-jump to the pad that's now to the right of the two in front of you. Then jump to the one ahead and left. Jump to the farthest left of the three in front of you. Carry on into the corner and pick up the two **MP5 clips** from the not-so-secret secret area on the ledge above the pad.

Go back to the pad you came from and long-jump to safety on to the jungle trail. Go forward to the down-slope, but before you go down it take a long-jump to a ledge on the left to get some very handy grenades. Go back and down the slope and get some guns ready; there's a little dinosaur down here. Once it's an exdino, run through the pool to the right and into the cavern. Climb the block to the right, turn left and jump across to the block on the other side. Climb up through the gap and into a corridor. Get down to the end and you can drop down into the crash site

There's another dinosaur down here (it comes at you from the left), so be prepared. Follow the left wall around,



past an area of darkness and a tree, and you'll reach the back end of the plane.

Here there's a strange pyramid-shaped outcrop. Walk to the top of it and you'll see a triangular ledge that you can jump on to. Turn around and there's a jump on to another ledge. Turn around again and there's an unpromising-looking long-jump into the darkness, just left of the ledge you came up by. Do it. Straight ahead of you is a drop into a room. There're some Uzi clips just to the right of where you came in.

From the obvious exit you must do a long-jump and grab, you'll find yourself hanging from a **trellis** on the other side of the room.

Turn right, swing along and take the first left. Next head left again at the end. Then right, across the dodgy-looking sparse bit, right again and drop down at the hole in the wall.

Turn back the way you came. Drop down, go round to the right and pull the **lever**. Now you can get to that lever you saw earlier. Leave the **savegame crystal** and climb back up to the hole in the wall. Swing along the trellis, back the way you came and along to that newly available lever.

At the end of the trellis, drop and grab; you'll find that this is a climbable wall. Climb down, and then back up to get at the lever. Throw it and more of the path becomes available.

From the edge of this tiny alcove a short-jump takes you on to the **pillar** with the **savegame crystal**. Jump forwards again to the ledge underneath the hole in the wall. Go back round and pull the lever again. Now climb back up to the hole in the wall, jump up and grab the trellis and follow it back round the way you came. When you get to

the far side of the huge stalactite (the one with a gate in it, opposite where you jumped in first) go right up against it.

Drop and then grab the climbable surface. Climb all the way down until Lara's feet are nearly touching the bottom. Then push the jump button and let go - you'll find yourself in little alcove with a lever. Pull the lever, turn around and jump back on to the stalactite. Climb up, go right and pull yourself into the now-open area. Grab what's there! Turn around. Now jump far to the right (to the ledge underneath the second lever you pulled in here). As you slide off the ledge, grab hold. Shimmy over until you're under that lever, then pull yourself up and press the jump button. You'll be back on the platform where the savegame crystal was lump back over to the hole in the wall climb up and go through it.

Drop down, haul yourself up to the platform in the far corner and crawl thought the **crawl-space**. You'll find yourself on a ledge high above the beginning of the crash site area. It's safe to drop down from here.

Now follow the wall around to the right, past a big tree and then round a sharp, slightly disguised turn to the right. Drop down, run forward and climb up.

You'll find yourself in a little cave leading into a clearing. There are some very handy MP5 clips just to your right. Get ready for combat – best weapon prepared. There's a man here, but he's not the real enemy that you're after so spare his life. Just after you sight him, two dinosaurs will charge out. Try and kill them both without hurting him. If he survives you can follow him, and he'll show you a gate he wants opening.

If he doesn't, just follow the left wall along from where you came in and you'll see a dark opening that leads down a tunnel to the gate in question. You can just make out a lever and another gate on the far side of it.

Head back into the clearing where you killed the dinosaurs. There are ledges around three sides. From the side opposite where you came in, you'll be able to climb up one of these ledges and jump into the branches of the trees. Up here you'll find a large medikit and (on another, nearby branch) some flares.

Head to the edge of the clearing and you'll see a slope downwards. The dino' down there is dead, but there are four tiny green ones that aren't, so have a weapon prepared.

To the left of where you slid down is another gate with a lever and a gate beyond it. Ignore it for now, but pick up the **flares** in front of it. Go to the water-filled cavern on the other side. Wade through the water and round to the right.



In what looks like a mini volcano you'll find a dead body. Loot the body and you'll get Commander Bishop's Key. You'll also find out that this is no volcano, it's really a dinosaur nest. As a t-rex comes lumbering round the corner, dash past it and run back to the second gate where you just picked up the flares.

The gate's open now and makes a great sheltering spot while you pick off the dino at your leisure. Pull the lever while you're here. Go back into the water-filled cavern and take the other fork this time. At the end are some flares and another lever. Give it a vank. Now the gates are open all the way back up to the top and you can return to the crash site.

Back by the plane, keep to the right-hand wall again. There's a square, black hole to the right (toward the rear end of the plane). Light a flare and you'll see it's a brick-lined passage. Drop down into it. At the end a gate will swing open into an arena. There's a dead body and a dead dino here. Draw a weapon and prepare for five of the tiny green dinosaurs to run out at you as you move in.

Kill them, then pick up the medikit and the MP5 clips. Of the five alcoves in here, two have levers in them. Pull them both. Go back the way you came and as you re-enter the crash site, you'll hear gunfire.

Climb the slope to the right and you'll see two men fighting a dinosaur. Let them get on with it. When they've killed it, slide down the slope towards them. Immediately right is an empty alcove

Run past it. Keep to the right wall. The next alcove to the right has a passage that leads down to a clearing with a bridge and an entrance to a temple. Here's another man fighting with a dinosaur - give him a hand if you like.

Just to the right of where you came in is a block you can climb up. Climb up the next block as well and you'll see a vine to your left.

Climb up this to the top. Leap backwards and keep your finger on the jump button you'll jump off a ledge and on to a branch with a dinosaur on it. Kill it.

At the far end of the branch (by the steep upward slope), there's a jump across to a ledge on the left. Jump up

from here to the triangular ledge in the corner. Turn round towards the tree, back against the wall, and jump and grab. Haul yourself up, jump on to the ledge and collect the e crysta

Jump from here on to the branch to your right and from this advantageous position take care of the next dinosaur. From this level there's a jump to a secret place to the left of where the branch slopes upwards. Get up there and collect the MP5 dips. It's a comparatively easy job to slide back down.

Walk towards the dinosaur hanging from a rope Longjump to the green patch just to the left of it for a small medikit. Before jumping back, shoot the dinosaur hanging from a rope. It'll fall off and into the river below, distracting the piranhas. Now jump back to where you came from and make your way back down to the ground the way you came up. Go over to the river, with the **piranhas** now feeding, it's safe to jump in and pull the under-water lever that's sited just by them. This opens a gate on the other side. Don't use the bridge (it'll just collapse) instead swim along the same side as the lever to the left until you find a point where you can get out. Prepare a weapon. You've opened a door that will release a dino. Kill it and go through the door. Keep your gun out – there's another one through here. Now you're locked in a large room with tell-tale gas holes in the floor.

There are three levers in here which we'll call levers 1, 2 and 3, counting clockwise from the entrance. Pull them all in order Lever 1 releases a dino. so be ready. Lever 3 releases two. Good luck. When all three are pulled, the door to the room opens again, and so does a trapdoor in the ceiling above the only raised bit in the room. Climb up into this new room to get your hands on the

There's a body in here. Go over to it and you can collect Lt Tuckerman's Key, but beware - yet another dino will spring out as soon as you do. That's it for in here.

Go back to the plane. On the left hand side (as it looks forward) is the outline of a door. Go up to it, jump up and grab. Shimmy left until you can safely haul yourself up; you're



now standing right on top of the plane's nose.

Run along the fuselage toward the back, jump forward when you can't run, and drop down the hole in the top. There's a dino in here, and some MP5 clips. In the cockpit are two keyholes.

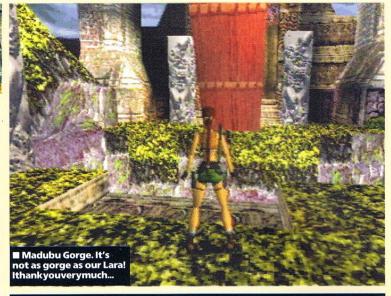
Use the two keys on them. Now drop down into the cargo hold at the back of the plane. At the far end is a purple room with a switch in it.

Hit the switch and the tailgate of the plane opens and the **gun** that you've just walked past is rolled out.

Run to the gun and get on it, press ⊗ to fire it. Hundreds of dinosaurs will charge at you, so use the gun to kill them all. It can be moved up and down as well as side-to-side.

Try and get a steady leftright rhythm going and you should have no problem despatching them. When they stop coming, elevate the gun and shoot past the wing lying along the ground. There are two sections of wall up there that you can knock out. Do it.

You'll probably have lost a few of your friends in this battle. Run around to where they fell and pick up the MP5 clips they've left behind. Run along the broken wing and jump over the river. Climb up the obvious place in the corner. Do the right-hand area first. There's a savegame crystal and a large medikit here. Don't use either of them as the level is about to end. Jump through to the other new area and the level's (finally) over



MADUBU GORGE

un forward. ignoring the bats that come out to your left. A green, venom-spitting demon is lurking here. Run on to the second bit of rock and take him out before he gets too close (use a shotgun). Turn right (past the second column) and then move slowly toward the edge. A demon will climb out.

Go down and three blocks to the left. Shortjump to the block in the middle of the river Longjump to the far side and grab. Shimmy right until you can haul up. Turn right, haul up.

Short-jump ahead. Go right, slide down on to the triangle. Left, shortjump on to the triangle. short-jump forward again on to the triangle.

Turn slightly left and short-jump on to the

crystal and switch.

Flick the switch. Jump back across and climb up through the now-fallen trellis. Facing the river (at the edge), jump up and grab the vines.

Swing across the river. Let yourself drop down on the far side. Jump off backwards and grab. Shimmy right until you can haul up. Turn right, aim as far to the right of the gorgeside that goes off at an "L" as you think you can long-jump.

When you hit and slide down, grab and shimmy right until vou can haul up. Jump up through the now-visible entrance Go into the cave: the first right is empty, second right goes down. Slide to the bottom, turn right against the wall and jump backwards and down, then grab and release.

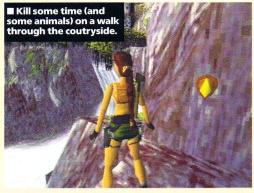
At the bottom turn round gently - you're in a spike trap. Walk forward through it. Drop down, and go quick left and right into a natural cave.

Ignore the savegame crystal you can glimpse to your left. Jump forward up the slope. Then run up and left up the sloping steps. At the top you'll be attacked. Left and drop down and throw the switch disguised as a nose

Run back down the stairs and past the natural cavern. Into the darkness and crawl forward through the obvious space. Be careful – there's another green creature here who'll try to trap you underneath. Haul up and then up again. Head across the rope bridge, left through the room, drop down, along to the end and jump up to the right for a savegame crystal

Stay here for a minute, enjoy the view, then safely shoot the newly appeared green creature that pops up back where you just came in. Then go back that way, this time turning left after you exit the crawl-space and making your way back up to the first





room of this cave complex, using the handy climbable walls to get past the two slopes. Go through **the gate** that you saw open when you first hit the nose/switch.

From here make a longjump towards the square platform you can just see in the waterfall. Then haul up to two triangular ledges in a row; the first a long-jump, the second a short. The second a long-jump will take you to just by the savegame crystal in the cave. Pick it up.

Go across to the other side of the bridge, jump straight up and grab the vines. Follow them all the way around the room (ignore the first opening) until you can go no further (next to another opening). Drop down and haul yourself up through the gap to the right. Turn right and go through the crawl-space. On the other side, stand up, go to the edge of the ledge, turn left and long-jump over to that climbable wall. Climb up and over, then follow the passageway along until you come out in a pool area.

Wahey **kayak!** Before you jump in, kill the two crocodiles, then jump in the water and find the lever that opens the grille. If you're facing the grille, it's down and to the right.

Climb in the kayak, have a few practice paddles and then launch yourself through the grille. Down you go - try and stay straight through the tube. When you hit bottom, paddle over to the far right for the second waterfall, but make sure you go down straight. At the bottom of this fall, paddle hard to the left across the green line that stops the cleavers. Turn around and then paddle through them. You start on the left, so must try to move across to the right. At the bottom, the current will take you to the left, but you must get to the right fork, turn the kayak around and paddle against the current - eventually you will make progress.

Go down the right fork, and keep right at the next fork (the **red lines** handily warn you of danger – don't cross one). When the river rejoins, it's slalom time, and you must avoid the red lines. The trick here is to keep your speed right down by back-paddling.

After you've done the first rapid, you have to work your way right over to the left of the river and cross the green line.

Then go to the right, and back over to the left past the savegame crystal. Carry on down, round the left-hand at the bottom and over a huge waterfall. Make sure you're fully healed before you go over as you're almost certain to lose some life. Stay in the middle of the water and you'll pick up a savegame crystal.

From the lagoon at the bottom, paddle up the river to your left into a chamber with piranha. This room also has an odd weight suspended from a gold chain. Turn sharp right and paddle up a sort of hallway that turns right and opens into a waterfall cave. Through the waterfall at the far end for a secret savegame crystal. Back to the piranha chamber and paddle upstream through the only other new exit.

Turn left and then take another left at the fork into a stagnant pool with a crocodile in it. Get out of the boat and on to dry land. Beware, a green creature will jump you as soon as you do. Once you've disposed of it and the croc, walk around to the only exit from this place back to the piranha pool. Go to the edge, jump up, forwards and grab the vines. Follow them all the way along past the two fire-breathing faces (stay as far away from them as possible). Follow the vines as far as they go, then drop down. Turn around and long-jump to the other side and pick up a rocket. Left, haul up, forward, haul up, Then go forward and drop down into the waterfall cave. Go right to the end, then jump to your right. Follow the path around to vour left and at the end jump to the triangle for a large medikit. Then go right up to the waterfall, turn left and long-jump to the other side for some secret MP5 clips. Go back to the other side, jump from the triangle to the walkway, then turn left and climb up. Turn right, go forward as far as you can, jump and grab. Haul yourself up. Turn right, jump and grab the vines. Swing along past another firebreathing face and take the right fork. Go to the end and drop down. Turn left and follow the path that leads away.

At the end there's a longjump over the **blades and spikes** to the base of a waterfall. Turn around and aim to the left of the sloping surface opposite. Long-jump and grab the climbable wall. Traverse up and left till vou can do no more. Drop down, turn around, go forward and into the entrance on your right.

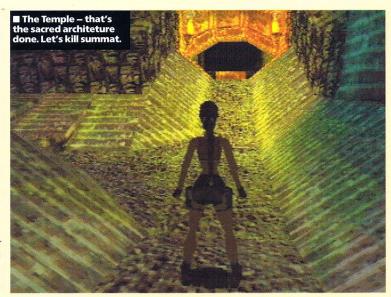
Turn around and fall backward into the hole, grabbing the lip as you go. Climb down the climbable surface to the bottom. Go along the corridor. A **boulder** will roll down towards you, use L2 to duck behind the raised platform in the middle. Head up and over that one and the same thing happens again, except with another boulder and another hiding place.

Pull yourself over the second one. Notice the boulder on the ceiling? That'll crush you unless you turn side on and walk sideways till you're lined up with the very beginning of the reflection of the flame on the far wall, then jump backwards and grab the ledge. Shimmy as far right as you can.

Then pull yourself back up. Down to the end and shortjump to the passage to the left. short-jump over the **flames**, and keep moving forward for more boulder ducking. Move forward and haul yourself up.

Now you're back at the scene of some early kayaking. Go right and long-jump to the first platform you can see. On to the climbable wall and shimmy left on to the next platform. Crawl through the gap left and out to the rapids. Short-jump to the block in the middle, then long-jump to the obvious promontory. shortjump to the block with the zip-wire. Ignoring the wire, go to the bottom of the island, long-jump to the savegame crystal and long-jump back again. Now go down the zip into the eerily lit blue and green area. Drop down into the bottom and climb up the column of faces. Haul over the top and look out for a green creature attacking from the right. Take the first left and pull the lever.

Go back to where you hauled up, and then down the corridor in front of you. A torch will light another green creature from the right. Drop to where he came up and take the slide down. You'll be where you left the kayak. Get back in. Go out the way you came and down the plughole, Follow it round to minimise damage. You'll fall into a large chamber with a croc. There're two landing points from where you'll be able to shoot it. One of the landing points has a gate in it. Drop off this one and dive to find the lever that opens it. Watch out though, two more crocs have now been released into the pool. Up and out of the water, through the gate and the level's finished.



TEMPLE OF PUNA

ou start in a long corridor. There are steps up to your right, down which two blow-darters are running. Deal with them quickly. Jump up and shoot the next one too. Go up to the end. haul yourself up twice and get ready for yet another pea shooterwielding maniac, Haul up. run all the way up to the top and go through the crawl space. Haul up and down to the end of the passage and pick up a small medikit. Now for a hard puzzle. Turn left and watch the rolling wheels go past. Wait until they just go past you to the right and slide down the slope. Turn and run left to just by the side of one of the faces (astride the line between a red and black square with the red to your left), now crouch down. The wheels roll back up, but just miss you. You now have time to hit the switch and crouch back down. Wait for the wheels again, and then go and do the same with the other face. Wait for the wheels, then turn around and move to the top of the slope and wait for them to come up, a well-timed jump takes

you over them and you can repeat the trick on the other side of the room. When you've hit all four switches, the door on the opposite side of the room to where you entered opens.

Run through it. Haul up and slide down through. When you land in this room go to the far left corner immediately and pull out the block. That stops the spikes from getting you. Now pull all three levers to open the door. Then fall backwards, grab and drop through the hole that's on the other side of the door. At the bottom, turn around and slide down into the boulder channel. To your left at the end is a lever to open the door. When you've pulled it, walk back towards the door. Notice the different colour block in the floor. As soon as you touch that the boulder starts to roll, so dash to the door from that point. Then turn right and keep dashing because there's another boulder on its way.

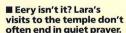
Your troubles aren't over because there're three blowdarters waiting for you down here. Dispose of them.

You're back at the spot you started the level from, only now the gate to the left of where you came in is open. Anyway, go down the slide and there's just **the boss** to defeat. In front of you is a **chair** that will swivel round when you get near it. Before you do there are two small medikits to collect: one to the left and one to the right.

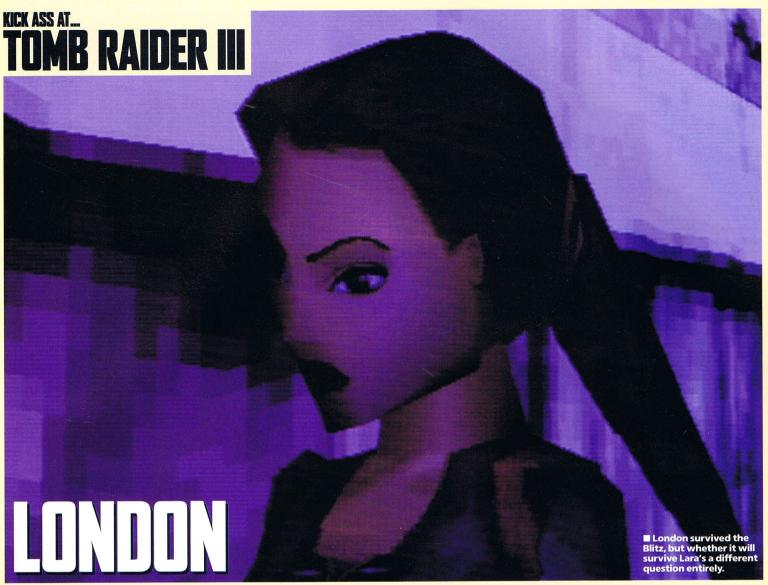
Don't use them now, unless you're poisoned of course.
Approach the chair with your best weapon ready.

When it swivels round jump backwards while firing, then keep jumping left and then right without stopping while still firing. Eventually there'll be a blue explosion.

Collect the **Ora Dagger** and **the level ends**.









THAMES WHARF

o get your hands on some extra goodies on this level, walk on to the bridge near the top, turn around and long-jump over the roof top (it can be done). Follow the passage to the left and you can pick up the savegame crystal and shotgun shells at the end. Back the other way, climb up on the block, go right, haul up on to the roof top, go forward and jump down on to the crane. Run along the gantry to the gap in the railings.



Turn left and drop down on to the counter-weight. Lower yourself backwards over the edge and drop down to the roof.

Slide down to a ledge. Walk off, taking care to avoid the barbed wire you'll find at the bottom.

In the middle there is a passageway – go down it and round to the right for some secret goodies that are guarded by two rats.

are guarded by two rats.
Back out, left to the end,
walk into the barbed wire and
haul up. Left, haul up and then
climb up to the platform on the
right. Back on to the counterweight, and haul back up on to
the crane. There's a long-jump
diagonally to the right. Along
to the end, short-jump to the

platform, left, jump and haul up, then slide down.

Haul up to the right, haul up again and long-jump back over the rooftop to slide down right by where you started.

Next move forward to the edge of the last platform. Turn around and drop backwards off the edge. Grab, drop, then jump immediately forward to a ledge. Shoot the **raven**.

Throw the switch here. Jump up and grab the ceiling, go across towards the **zip** wire. Drop down at the end, grab the zip wire and go across to the other side. Slide down, grab, release and grab again. Shimmy right and watch the **sniper's** movements. When he heads away from you, hall up and shoot him. Forward and hard left, and throw the switch.

Back out, grab the small medikit from the corpse and then head into the abandoned warehouse. Go left to the end. right and jump to the ledge. The second block crumbles, so beware From here shoot the two rats on the far side (you may have to drop off and climb back to disturb them). Run over the collapsing platform and jump to where the rats were. Follow the long corridor around to the right, shoot the sniper at the end and collect the Flue Room Key from

him. Head out and face in to the room. To your far left on this ledge is a drop down to a platform. Drop backwards and grab. Drop down towards the platform, but grab the other, hidden, platform on the way.

Haul up, go to the end and hit the switch, go back round and down to the platform below. Through the crawl space here you can get **harpoons**.

Back out and a long-jump to a sloping ledge on the same wall. Haul up here, head to the end, turn right and walk to the highest edge.

Jump up, grab and haul up to the warehouse entrance. Back out to the alley and drop down where the green block has moved. On to a new ledge, shoot the raven and haul up to the first visible crawl-space.

Go left and right into **the flue**. Get out at the end, jump
over and flick the switch. Jump
back and go straight through
the flue. At the end, drop out
backwards, down the slide and
on to a crate. Kill the sniper
that you'll find down here.

Go over to the far side of the alley and there're some flares and a **savegame crystal** in the corner behind the crates. Back to the other side and climb up the crates to the left. Jump and grab to the ledge and climb up the wall here. Drop off at the platform and up the other climbable wall. Round to the left and you'll see a third wall to climb.

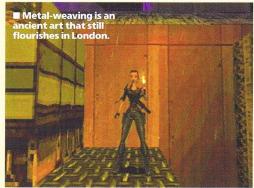
At the top, head straight forward and jump across to the lower of the two platforms, then go left and long-jump to the other side of the alley. Go right, drop down and collect the **small medikit**. Face the wall, jump up and grab and shimmy to the far right. Haul up and follow round to your left. At the end (**Point A**) go down the passage to the right.

Follow it round to the end and long-jump over. Left, haul up at the end and shoot the raven. Hit the switch up here and grab the large medikit. Back out and jump over the gap, turn right and jump down to the painter's platform. Kill the raven. Jump over to the doorway, pick up the flares and use the Flue Room Key to open the door.

Drop down, run forward and get the **savegame crystal**, left and hit the switch. Back out, dodging the flames. Back down to the painter's platform, work down to the left and go back through the flue. Down to the floor and work all the way back up to **Point A**

Shoot the sniper down the passage. Instead of going





down the passage, haul up at the end. Follow this passage round to its end, then jump forward and grab and haul up for some **shotgun shells**. Turn around and jump back. Now let yourself gently down the hole at the end.

Go down the slide and jump over and grab (from the back of the platform) at the bottom. Haul up, down the next slide and collect the savegame crystal.

Go left and follow the passage down, picking up a large medikit. Ready a gun and go down the third slide, killing the rats at the bottom. Keep your gun out, drop down the hole into the **switch room** and turn left to shoot the soldier. Hit the only available switch in this room and run down the passage out. Go down to the far end and right, along and into the water.

Swim straight down for some **Uzi clips** and a small medikit. Then pull the neon-lit lever. Head out into the long passageway, all the way back to the entrance and hit the available switch again.

Go back down the passage and then first right to the end. Down into the water and through the open door in the bottom. Let the fans slow down and swim through past them. Surface to the left, haul out and ready a weapon for killing the **soldier**.

Head up the slope, pause by the crawl-way to the right and shoot the rats running down it. Along to the end of the passage and pick up the shells. Now go through that crawl-space you saw.

Go out at the end and pick up the small medikit. Along to the end, then drop down, turn around and go through the doorway. Avoiding the machine down here, go into the middle and see where the blue panel is (in the recess you were shown when you entered the room). Go down to the far right, pick up the savegame crystal and carry on to the light switch round the corner. Turn the lights on. Back to the other end of this large chamber and (keep an eye on the robot) pull out the cage at the end.

Push and pull it until it's at one of the intersections by the blue panel. Wait for the machine to burn out against the panel. Exit the chamber and climb up all the way to the first room you dropped into. Hit the new switch and kill the sentry who comes down. Hit the other switch. Down to the second pool at the far end of the long corridor. Dive in and haul out at the red exit on the other side.

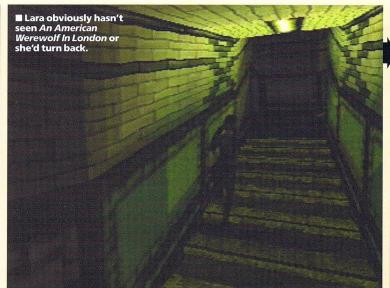
Run to the third **pool**. Swim over to the ledge on your left, haul out and kill the guard. Go into the room and hit the switch on the far side. Now go all the way back to the start of this section to hit the newly-revealed switch.

Go out to the third pool, left along the gantry and, in the middle, jump up and grab the ceiling. Swing along, left and then right to the end and drop down. Kill the rats coming from the right. Go into the little crawl-space and get the small medikit. Run along to the other end of this passage, collecting the savegame crystal. Right at the end, pick up the large medikit and drop into the second pool. Climb out, shoot the guard and go back to the switches room. Hit the new switch and make your way back to the third pool. Dive in and go all the way to the bottom, go through the hole and swim all the way along the tunnel, going left at the first gate. There's an opening at the end. Surface for air. Dive back and get the shotgun shells and small medikit from behind the alcoves on one side Haul out at the passage on the right at one end of the pool, kill the sniper and gain a small medikit.

Collect the savegame crystal from the alcove to the left. Jump over the barbed wire, grab and climb up to the top. Walk through the barbed wire to the middle of this ledge, turn left, jump and grab the platform. Haul up, turn right and long-jump, grab and haul again.

Walk through the barbed wire to the right and jump up to the platform. Walk left along the roof and haul up at the highest point at the far end. Turn right and walk over the roof top, slide down and go to the far right at the bottom. Lower to where there's no wire. Walk to the end to get yourself some goodies. Back to the roof and you need to get the sniper. Haul yourself up from the apex.

Go left along the ledge, get the sniper. Carry on when you get to the far side, jump down and then the level ends.



ALDWYCH

fter you've hit two slopes, grab and haul up for some shotgun shells. Drop in the water, haul out and go up four flights of steps. Go left and kill the torch-bearer, for a small medikit. Go out into the ticket hall. Climb on top of either of the two left-most ticket booths to get shotgun shells, Uzi clips and flares, and a block to pull out in one corner. In another corner is a drop down, do it then let yourself down the next drop, and climb down the ladder to the savegame crystal

Haul up to your right, shoot the window and go back up the stairs to the ticket hall. Go down the right-hand set of escalators. Drop down to the tracks at the end.

Run to the blue light, as the train comes to you, then head down the passage to the right. Go up the slope and kill the two thugs. Get the small medikit round the corner.

Turn round and climb the crates to your right, turn right, go along and over a crate to a savegame crystal. Climb back up on to the crate and kill the dog. Long-jump across to your left. Long-jump to the crates opposite. Turn right,

jump up, grab and haul, pick up the **Uzi clips**. Jump down and back across. Turn round, jump up, right and grab the climbable section. Climb up and jump off backwards to a ledge.

Turn around, haul up and kill the **thug** who comes from the left. Face back the way you came, jump forward and grab. Swing along the ceiling to the right and drop down at the end. Slide down, right and haul up. Turn round, jump forward and get **the rocket** up here.

Go back down and haul up again. Save the game here if you have a spare crystal.

Drop down the slope backwards, grab, release, drop on to a collapsible platform, jump left and you'll slide down, jump and grab, release, fall through a collapsible platform, grab, haul-up and jump backwards to safety.

Turn round and go into the room. Drop down the hole. Go left, haul-up and go down the passage to the left, pick up the large medikit. Back up to the all-metal room and up through the ceiling. Jump across at this level and round the corner for a savegame crystal. Head back and climb up the wall. Haul-up at the top; you can stand on the edge without getting burned. Edge to the right. When the flame dies, run across and haul up to the right. Again you can stand here without burning.

Now go forward, haul up and collect the small medikit. Go left, haul up and then go left to the end. Jump and grab the climbable wall to your left. Climb to the middle and jump off backwards, hit the switch.

Back to the climb, haul-up and crawl under the flame. Get the **Uzi clips**. Turn around and lower yourself over the other side. Follow this round, hauling up twice and into the roofspace. Go left to the end, kill the rat and pick up the large medikit. Go back out and drop down through the hole. On to

the platform and kill one man and his dog. Go back down the **big hole** on to the track and towards the blue again. Head back in to the right and work all the way to the top in here, go right into the top corner and haul up through the hole.

Turn round, jump and get the shotgun shells. Jump forward and out, and kill the man and the dog.

In the middle of this hall is a room with some MP5 clips. There's also a collapsible platform. Fall through it and pull the block at the end. Climb out and go down the other hole. Follow along and crawl through. Haul up to the right. run along, round to the right and into a green-lit chamber There are two timer switches here, lanore them for the moment and carry straight on through here, up the slope and follow round into a chamber with three doors: these are the doors controlled by the timer switch. As you face them. number them 1, 2 and 3 from left to right. Go back to the timer switches. The left-hand switch opens door 1, the righthand doors 2 and 3.

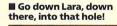
Each of these instructions involves throwing a switch and dashing to the appropriate door. Go into 3, and throw the switch, head out the slide at the back and along the corridor to the switches.

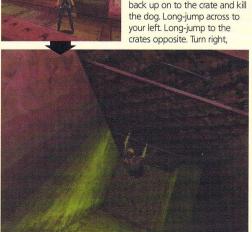
Now 2: haul-up on the farside and up through the hole in the roof. Throw the switch and follow this along, go down at the end by the switches again.

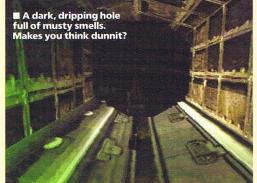
Now 1, turn left inside the door, haul up, jump up, grab and swing over the water. Drop and grab on the far side, and haul up for shotgun shells, a savegame crystal and Solomon's Key.

Now down into the water, and down a tiny hole tucked away in a corner of the pond, swim along and exit back into the **ticket hall**. Go on to the roof of the far-left ticket booth (as you enter the level), jump up and grab the side of the block you moved earlier.

Climb and haul up at the top. Drop down to the right, go







right and lower yourself down to the ticket office.

Pick up the large medikit and the **Maintenance Key**. Flick the switch and exit into the ticket hall. Down the right-hand escalators, mind the gap, on to the platform and use the Maintenance Key on the panel at the far end.

Through the door, get the small medikit, the Uzi clips and flick the light switch. Run to the far end of the platform and get the **Old Penny**. Back off the platform and down the large hole at the bottom of the escalators. Run down the track to the blue light and into the room with the crates again.

Climb up the crates as previously, but this time, before you jump to the first climbable wall, go along these crates to the wall, drop down into a hole and flick the light switch.

Now work back round to the drill hole, drop in and across the top of the drill, haul-up on the far side and get the other **Solomon's Key**.

Go right, haul-up and round to the end. Drop down and go down to the far end and round the corner for a large medikit, back to the middle and drop down. Across the big hole, up the escalators and into the ticket hall

One of the ticket booths has a slightly darker window, use the Old Penny and a Ticket appears on the floor. Go down the left escalators, kill the thug on the platform. Back off the platform and down the end there's a window to smash and a secret area to drop into. Back to the platform, down on to the rails, kill two rats and run right toward the purpleblue light. Kill the thug who comes out of the first door on the right. Go in the second door, hit the switch and back to the first for a savegame crystal, now go through the third door, over the pond and through the switch door at the end. Go first right, first right and hit the switch (If the following gets confusing, notice that the symbols by the switches match the ones on the doors and work it out for yourself - you'll find a couple more goodies if you spend the time).

Turn round. First left, first right, second left, and hit the switch at the far end. Turn around. First right, first right, turn left and down to the end for a small medikit. Back around and hit both switches in

this room. Out into the maze and first left, first left and hit the two switches in here (one for the second time). Turn around the way you just came in and go first right, first left. first left and right for a medikit Turn around, First left, first right, first right first left and hit the switch at the farthest end. Turn around. First right, first right and hit the switch opposite. Turn around. Through the doorway, first right, first left, first right and hit the switch. Turn around, First right, first right, first left, first right. Right again to get some clips. Then back out, right and then left at the oil painting, along the corridor and right at the end into the ceremonial chamber. Look out for both collapsible floors and spike traps in here. In the middle of this room is a sa crystal and some Uzi clips. Pick 'em up. There are two keyholes in here. Use the two Solomon's Keys on them.

Through the open door, across the collapsible section and get the **Masonic Mallet**. Jump back over the pit and kill the dog. To the right is a collapsible platform, run or jump over it and go through the curtains to pick up the **Ornate Star**.

Back out, and run to the farthest corner of the room and through the new doorway to the left. Grab the flares and the small medikit, light a flare, go into the waterand follow the twisty passage to the end.

Haul out, haul up to the next platform, turn round, long-jump and grab, haul up into the crawl-space, go right and down on to the platform. Turn round, haul up, turn round, jump forward and grab the ceiling. Swing left and to the end, drop, grab and haul up into the crawl-space, then go along to the end and shoot two rats.

Use the **Ticket** on the ticket barrier and up into another ticket hall. Down the right escalator and use the Masonic Hammer on the door at the bottom. In here, flick the switch, and go back out. Drop down, ready a weapon and go left. A door will open; shoot the thug, pick up his small medikit, and carry on along the passage, Jump across, and shoot the dog that comes round from the left. Go down there and out on to a platform with a train Down to the far end of the

platform and shoot the firemesmerised thug who'll drop a small medikit. Pick up the **savegame crystal** and drop down on to the tracks.

Down to the rubble-filled end and crawl into a hole at the far right for goodies. Back to the second ticket hall, run round the exit barriers and use the **Ornate Star** on the ticket office door. Shoot the thug, go in and haul up at the end.

Follow the passageway, through the crawl-space and out at the far end. Drop down for the **savegame crystal**.

Go out through the door, down the steps and shoot the dog. Back up to the ticket hall, down the **escalators** and jump across at the bottom. Ignoring the platform take the last left, up over the bridge and through the open door. Turn right, drop down at the orange, left and down, and go through the crawl-space. Jump and grab up through the hatch into the train. Throw the switch up here and drop down. Head through the crawl-space and out.

You have a choice. If you go down the first right, collect the small medikit and drop off the end, the level ends.

Remember this point. Or you can get another secret room, and it's worth it. Go to the end of the passage and right. A thug will emerge from the right. Don't kill him... yet. If you let him run away from you and round the corner he'll get his friend, who'll open a door. Wait til you hear the door open before killing them.

Go down the first bit of the slope and right through the open door. Get the rocket and throw the two switches Go back into the passage, back the way you came and right at the other end. Up through the hatch and into the train, throw the switch and drop down the new hole. Head through the crawl-space and climb up the concrete block, Jump, grab and haul out to the right and go through the door to the left. Now work your way back to the hall to find a secret room stuffed with goodies, guarded by a thug. There's a switch in here that re-opens the path through the train carriage to

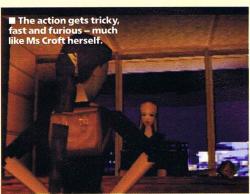


While not the normal

to Aldwych, Lara's

route from Ludgate Circus

version saves a tube fare.



LUD'S GATE

urn left and follow

the thug down in to a room with two shallow pools. Take the left path to the end, slide down and jump and grab up in the righthand corner before you get crushed. Slide down and drop at the end, hit the switch to your right, turn round and out to a cave. To the far right is a brick platform, drop on to it. From here drop down backwards and grab. Release, grab and shimmy to the far right. Haul up into a crawl-space and get out to the right in a secret area. Get your hands on some stuff.

In the middle there's a ledge to haul up to. Then haul up right. Turn round and diagonally long-jump to the top of the slide Right, out of the cave, left by the switch and haul up. Climb up to just above the level of the first platform to your left and jump backwards. Pick up a small medikit, and go back to the climbable wall. Climb up and left. When Lara is just above a green section to her left, jump off backwards for a e-game crystal and shotgun shells.

Slide down, jump and grab, climb left and to the top, haul up. Through the crawl-space, all the way to the end and listen for the **guard's footsteps** to move away before going round to the right and getting some shotgun shells.

Back along the crawl-space, stand up in the middle and haul up to your left. Forward, ready a weapon, drop down and kill the soldier. The switch opens the door and there's another soldier who comes in. Pull the block out, go round the other side and push it into the corner. Out into the corridor, first right and into the Egyptian room. Round the back of the pillars for a small medikit. Climb up the first three blocks at the base of the central column and turn round. Long-jump and grab the ceiling, swing forward and at the end, turn left, go the edge, drop, grab and haul up for a savegame crystal





Jump back and grab the ceiling. Go right to the end and drop down safely. Go forward, right and haul up at the ladder. Round the corner and in this **small room** push the block under the hole. Get up on to it and haul up left into the crawl-space. Turn round, back out and drop down the other side.

Out and back down the pillar and climb the moved column on the other side of the room. Jump and grab from the top to a platform, right and up into the crawl-space. Down and up again, down the slide to the right, forward and drop down. Go along the corridor to the room with the block in, move it and head back to the Egyptian room where the movable block has moved

Climb up to the top of it, jump, grab and haul up, run across the diagonal to the ledge to the right and pull the lever. Turn round and jump back to the platform, drop down on to the movable column, long-jump and grab to the ceiling. This time go right across the underside of the dropped platform, release, grab and haul up. Flick the lever. Back out and drop, work back up to the base of the ladder and climb up. Shimmy left at the top, drop down, turn round and jump and grab to the platform to the left. Drop and grab to the platform diagonally right, and drop off. Turn right, jump, grab, haul up, turn around and jump over to get some shells and flares. Turn round, drop down, haul up, haul up again and round to the right. Down the short slide, jump at the end, grab and haul up. Forward, haul up to the right, turn left and walk to the top of the slide. Down the slide and jump and grab immediately forward from this collapsible platform.

Haul up and collect the **Embalming Fluid.** Through the crawl-space and collect the Uzi clips. Out at the end, ready a weapon and kill the guard who comes round the corner. Go along the corridor and into the crawl-space left at the end. Follow it through, ready for a guard right at the end.

Hit the switch in this room and go through the door to collect a rocket. Back out and down the hole in the floor behind the blocks. Face toward the savegame crystal, jump forward and grab. Swing along the zigzag path and you'll automatically drop down at the





end to get it. Face out into the room again and edge to the far left of the platform.

Jump forward, grab and go past two more white lines on the ceiling before dropping to a platform that's on top of the **Sphinx's head.** Walk onto the Sphinx's peak, drop off backwards and grab either side. Drop for the rocket. Save now

Go to one of the two most extreme edges of this platform. Turn to face the same direction as the Sphinx is facing, and turn slowly into the middle of the room until you can see a slope behind you. Jump backwards, slide, grab then drop; you'll slide again and end up unharmed on one of the **Sphinx's legs**.

Drop down between the legs, then down on to floor level. A guard will come to investigate. Run round to the right-hand side of the Sphinx as you're facing it. A guard will appear halfway along the passage. Further on down are **shotgun shells**. Return to the passage and go up the steps; at the top is a ledge you can jump, grab and haul up to.

Pull the block out, drop off the ledge and go round to jump and grab up on to the block. Climb up to the top, then go right and drop down into a new passageway.

alarm. Haul up underneath it facing the wall.

Now go left to the end, agaon and haul up on some concrete blocks, into a crawl space and drop down for a

Go along to the end, turn round and jump, grab and haul up. Go along, drop down right at the end, then drop down left. Push on the block that you're facing. Then turn round and pull the other block twice. Drop backwards off the ledge, grab and shimmy right. Climb up and re-follow the route, back to the room that had two pools.

Pick the right of the two passages on your left, down the slide, get the large medikit and jump on to the climbable wall. Now work your way back to the slide before leaping to the **Embalming Fluid**.

Slide down backwards and grab. Now let go. You'll slide, bounce and fall into a pool. Swim down and a current will help you down a long corridor. When you come to the end, swim left and up to the air. Haul out of this pool, collect the **harpoons** and back into the pool. Dive down and round to the right, continuing on to the end by a window.

Surface then dive down and pull the **lever** (you'll need a flare to find it). Swim back the way you came in and surface in the newly-opened hole halfway along. Haul out, right and haul up. Hit the switch and go back into the water.

Light a **flare**, swim to the first pool, look for an opening to your left and go through it. Don't surface when you come out of the tunnel, instead you should swim to the left and surface at the far end.

Haul out to your right. Turn round. If you look out to your left there's a **scuba diver**. Jump over the water, turn left and jump over the nearest triangular slope.

Go forward to behind the diver and get the **harpoons**. Ready a weapon and kill the diver and the guard (don't worry if the diver gets away). On these crates is the **Boiler Room Key**. Go over to the crates underneath the rocky overhang to your right for some more harpoons.

On this same side of the water is a big rocky slope with some **steel platforms** at the side. Work up to them and drop down behind for a large medikit. Now work over to the alarm. Haul up underneath it, facing the wall

Now go left to the end, left agaon and haul up on some concrete blocks, into a crawl-space and drop down for a **small medikit** Back to the alarm and go left again, but this time go right at the end, up a slope, left into a passageway and haul up right at the end into a crawl-space.

Down the other side for a savegame crystal and some flares. Go back out and along the brick passageway, there's a sentry at the end. Down the slide and into the water, and there's a hole in the river-bed. Head along the tunnel where the scuba diver waits if you didn't get him earlier. Kill him, go back and get some air; this is a long tunnel. Along to the end where a crocodile awaits you. Ignore him and get some air, swim out into a many-alcoved chamber.

To your right and up are two alcoves, slightly brighter than the others. The one to the right has a **dead frogman** in it, the other has an air pocket. Get some air and kill the croc.

Imagine the alcoves are numbered 1-8 clockwise from the one with the airhole and that they're designated U or D, for Up or Down. So the one with the airhole is U1 and you came in via D4. Go to U2 (the

alcove with the dead frogman)where you'll pick up a groovy underwater vehicle. Use this to zoom around – you'll have to keep going back to U1 for air. In the alcove directly below the frogman (D2) is a large medikit. The alcove directly opposite that one (D5) has a savegame crystal in D3, there's a lever – pull it. It opens a door in U4. This is a difficult journey. Go there and pull the lever. This opens a door in U6; go there and pull the lever. Two frogmen are released into the area through a new door in U8. Go through that and follow the passage round and a long way up for air at the top. Dismount and haul up where you can.

Drop into the water on the far side and turn back round. Just below where you can haul out is a lever that turns off the flames - pull it. Haul out, up to the right, turn right and jump to the platform. Long-jump to the next platform, turn left, jump forward and collect the small medikit and the Uzi clips. Slide back to the platform. Longjump to the far end. Go forward, round to the right twice and along to the end, avoiding the pile-drivers. Haul up at the end, go to the end, turn right, long-jump forward and grab. Swing along to the hole in the waterfall. Drop, grab and crawl through. Out the other side, use the Boiler Room Key and get the savegame crystal and throw the switch. Back out, slide down the waterfall and work your way back round again, but this time swing over

to the far side of the waterfall.

Drop down and then drop
down again to the left. Pick up
all those **goodies**.

Now go back to your underwater vehicle and dive down all the way back to the alcoves. The new hole is in U3, directly opposite U8, where you come out.

Don't try to catch your breath in U1, it has filled up. Go through U3, then round to the left and then all the way up to the air. Dismount. You can haul out on two sides, get the large medikit first, then deal with the devil's-own **pendulums**.

As long as you keep to one side and crouch when you land it's not too hard. There's time to make a long-jump between each swing. Head through the corridor at the far end. At the beginning of the corridor is a haul-up to the left. Haul up again. Down the slide and haul up at the bottom. Turn right and haul up again, round to the right and to the edge of a huge drop. Long-jump to the far side and grab the handhold. Release and grab again, haul up into the crawl-space. Crawl left and up, left again and out.

Long-jump to the **red gap**, grab and haul up into the crawl-space. Through the crawl-space and drop at the far end.
Forward, haul up and down the slide, through the crawl space and **the level ends**.



CITY

ake a minute or so to admire the view and the fish before going through the door in the corner – it's the only peace you'll get for some time. Out of the door and straight into trouble as you're put under a magical barrage.

There's a pattern to your opponent that's worth knowing. She alternates between firing ten and 11 shots at you between recharges.

The first shot of the sequence she fires is extra-powerful and has a bigger blast radius. Use the available cover to crouch behind and try to stay on the far side of any platforms, It's also worth knowing that as you climb up, she'll be forced to move to new positions to be able to fire at you and won't be able to fire while she's doing that. Keep an eye out for the plentiful medikits - don't bother picking them up when you see them,

there'll be a chance to go back and get them later. One last thing, if you get lost on this level, you just have to look for the flashing light that signposts your next goal.

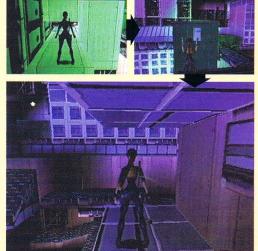
So, it's out across the roof top and to the slope going up to the right, run up, haul up at the end, go left, jump up, grab and swing to the other side.
Drop down, left, roll and jump and grab up to the top of the **bridge** you just swung across. Run across here to the switch and hit it. Back over the bridge, left at the end, haul up and then jump up and grab through the fallen section.

Turn round, jump across, jump and haul up. Run across this bridge and jump off to the left and grab the **climbable** wall. Climb to the top and go through the crawl-space. On the far side, stand up and turn round in safety.

Wait for a recharge, then forward, jump and grab up and carefully long-jump right to the other building.

Hide behind the **pillar** at the far end. Shoot the box on its side and your enemy will perish as the electrics short circuit. Don't forget to go and collect any of the spare earlier medikits before going further. The bridge you came across is now electrified, so long-jump back the way you got here.

From where you longjumped before, turn right and long-jump to the other building. Climb up and then turn left. long-jump from here to the other building. Along to the left and haul up. Haul up right and go left and over the concrete block. Throw the switch on its far side and its safe to go and get The Eye Of Isis. Level finished. As it's perfectly possible to complete this level in about three minutes, it may be worth repeating if you used up any ammo, medikits or savegame crystals, as you don't need to waste them.

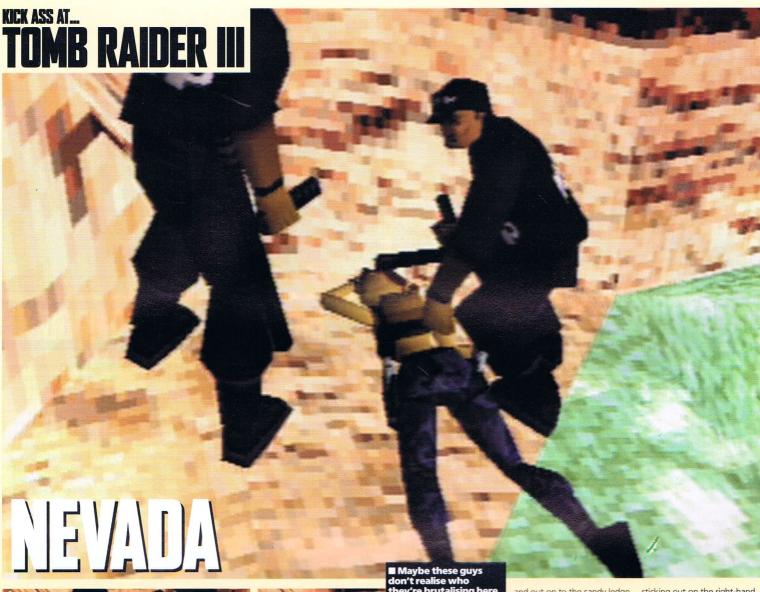


■ Leverage is a big deal in

the City, it can open many

lucrative doors. There's a

lesson here somewhere.





NEVADA DESERT

alk forward. Get your gun out and dispose of the two buzzards. In front of you are several bushes, behind the right-most is a rattler. Go through the gap in the rocks and carry on to the right of the pool and into the ravine. At the end, turn right, jump up and go right. Push the block to the left here and get the shotgun shells. Carry on along the passage, haul up twice. Left and haul up. Turn round, fall

backwards and grab. Shimmy to the right of the block and drop down.

Kill the rattlers down here and pick up all the flares, small medikit and savegame crystal.

Push the dark block through and go back out to where you dropped in. This time long-jump to the next block, then do it again. Turn right and haul up. From here run along the passage-way and out into the open air.

Walk along the path to your right, in front of the **green tank** and be prepared for a surprise. Get to the end, turn right and long-jump across to the ledge. Follow the ledge around and watch out for the

rattler in the bush at the end.

Now for a tricky long-jump

Now for a tricky long-jump over the ravine. Walk along this new ledge, short-jump across and then run off the end of this next ledge. You land on a **red-rock ledge**. Walk off the end off this one, turn right and pick up the large medikit.

Turn around and go back on to the highest part of the red-rock ledge. Long-jump and grab over to the big outcrop. Work your way up to the top, looking out for another rattler on the way.

Soon you'll be on top of the green tank. Drop down the hole and then swim along the twisting passageway until you come out in a pool. Haul yourself out and go forward through the **pointed arch** and out on to the sandy ledge. Turn right and long-jump to the triangular ledge. Short-jump and grab from the far side to a barely visible platform. Get ready for a **buzzard**. From the edge it's just a short-jump to a square platform below.

You can walk round this ledge and then haul up at the end. Move to the highest part of the platform and haul up. From here it's a long-jump and grab to the other side. Walk left along this ledge and then short-jump to the triangle. Haul up and shoot the obligatory rattler in the bush. At the end turn right and short-jump. Take time to enjoy the fly-past.

Turn and face the hole. Jump off backwards and grab. Drop and grab. Shimmy along left until you can haul up. Jump and grab the vines. Follow them around to the right. Go right up against the wall, drop and grab. Climb left and slightly down and drop off on to the overhung ledge. Turn left and run along to the end, jump across to the climbable wall and grab.

Člimb all the way up to the top and jump backwards off. From this platform long-jump diagonally across the top of the waterfall. From here short-jump forwards. Then a long-jump to the little platform

sticking out on the right-hand corner. Turn left and long-jump across the river, then walk around on to the sandy area. Take the left past the pillar and kill the rattler on the way. Where a stalagmite nearly meets stalactite go past to the right and carry on round. Shoot the man standing here.

When you come out on the far side of the hydroelectric turbine, turn around and climb up the two-stage ladder to the top.

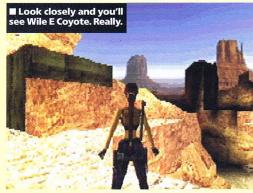
Haul yourself up on to the steel, turn right and follow it round all the way to the right until you come out in the open air by a lock. There's a buzzard here. Climb up on to the iron post, turn left, cross the lock and shoot the obvious rattler on the other side. Keep going round to your right and jump over the two dam outlets.

Next to the second bush (complete with rattler) are two grenades. Now back to the locks, jump in the water, swim down to your left and you'll be able to see a lever.

Pull it, turn around and get the **Desert Eagle clip** from the new open alcove opposite.

While you're in the swimming mood, swim right out of the alcove and back to the two dam outlets round the corner to the right. At the very





far end, turn right and you'll see a lever. Pull it. Turn around, swim up and catch your breath. There's an open grille between the two **yellow metal** struts between the two dam outlets. Swim down it. There are two levers in this long passageway; one just as you enter which is above where you have to swim through and one just round a tight right-hand bend.

Both can be easily missed, so take your time and go back to the surface if you have to.

When you've pulled both levers, go all the way through the passageway and you'll eventually emerge inside the dam. Run all the way along the passage and throw the **switch** at the end. Take the right-hand passage to discover the fun way out.

Back to the locks and onwards into the now-drained area ahead. Run down the right-hand side and drop into the river bed. Go along to the end and pick up the large medikit hidden round to the left. Line yourself up straight with the small medikit on the ledge on the far side and longjump, grab and haul your way up to it. Jump back over and drop down to the far righthand side of the dry waterfall to the easily visible platform there. Jump through

waterfall to the easily visible platform there. Jump through the waterfall to your right for a rocket. From here jump down and right to the platform just round the corner below.

Long-jump over the river to the next platform, turn right and then long-jump on to the slightly sloping platform. From here drop down into the hydroelectric **turbine room**. Run right around to the other side of the noisy thing and where stalactite meets stalagmite turn right and run through the zigzag passageway. In the room with the lift, kill the workman, then go right, turn left and over the two wooden slopes to collect the **savegame**

crystal. Go in the lift and get the **Detonator Switch**. Go back out to the hydro-electric turbine room, go right and make your way back out along the riverside platforms.

Eventually you should be standing on the platform by the pillar with waterfalls on both sides. As you look out, there's a platform a long-jump to the right. Once you're there, haul up for a small medikit. Back down on to the ledge, long-jump towards the

climbable wall on the far side of the ravine and grab. Climb down, release and grab again. Haul up and jump and grab on to the climbable wall to the right. Climb up to the

Detonator Room.

Get the savegame crystal on a ledge to your right and the small medikit back in the room. Follow the wires down to the TNT and get the flares from the blue cave. Go back up to the detonator. Use the Detonator Switch on the detonator and then get out of the way before a loosened boulder crushes you.

Back down to the nowexploded TNT. Climb up the two red rocks to your left as you come in. Turn right and long-jump, grab and haul up on to the square platform.

Turn around and long-jump to the triangle. Left and short-jump to the next ledge. Walk round it and haul up to your right at the end. Go through the crawl space and take a look at the **military base**. Drop down into the valley. Run around, keeping to the right. In the middle of three bushes are some grenades. Turn so that the base is in front of you and to the left.

You can see an opening. Run towards it. Haul up to a crawl-space. Crawl through and follow the passage round.

When you can stand up, keep going forward. Where there's a drop down to the left, there's also a jump across and grab. Do the latter. Turn right, jump up, grab and haul.

Go forward and into the water. Swim round the central pillar until you see a lever. Pull it and watch a door open. Then swim down the **corrugated tube** to pull the lever on your left. Back out of the water and back the way you came until you fall down where before you jumped across. Climb back up the other side (to where you jumped from) and back out to the military base. Run past the perimeter wire and turn left at the end.

Keep running towards the big opening in front of you. Slide down into it, turn left and go through. Just as it opens out there are **two rattlers**. Ignore the door for a minute and go right round the outcrop in the middle and read the signs. Back to the door and through.

Throw the switch. Now back to the military base clearing (there are two red

rocks to climb and then jump up where you just slid down). Go right at the perimeter fence and back into the passageway with the crawl space.

This time drop down when you get to the hole in the floor. Go right and crawl through to your left. Take out the two unarmed **bozos**.

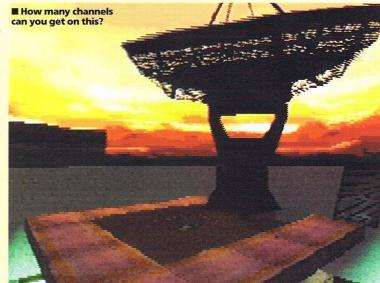
Over at the far side of the structure is a ladder, climb it. Go through the doorway, swim round and climb up.

From here it's possible to use a **grenade** launcher (if you have one) to take out the guards in the compound.
Otherwise just long-jump through the gap. Now you're in the compound.

Kill the guards from this position. Then drop down and run round to the right. Keep going until a plane flies past. Go right into the warehouse there are two guys in here. Climb around the packing cases for a small medikit. Back down to the ground and get on the buggy. Use it to get up on the roof of the main building. via the steel ramp, where you'll find the Generator Access Card. Go back down the ramp and drive right round the building. Get off by the grey slab. Climb up it and go into the pool room.

Shoot the guy. Go through and into the office, turn right and use the Generator Access Card on the slot at the end by the door. Shoot the guy who comes out of the now-open door. Go through and use the switch. Back out and on to the buggy and drive to the front gate. Dismount and flick the switch to open the gate.

Drive left and back down the large opening, left at the bottom and drive fast up the outcrop in the middle of the clearing and then jump over the fence. **Level completed**



HIGH SECURITY COMPOUND

ou start in your cell facing the door. Turn around and jump up to the window, triggering the laser sensors. As soon as you do this a guard will enter your room.

Turn around, jump over him and head out through the door. Sharp left and dash along the landing to get some distance away from the pursuing MP. Once you're far enough away from him (you may have to go downstairs and back up again) hit any of the switches on the landing. These open the cell doors. A prisoner will come out and kill the MP for you.

Now for the jailbreak. Open all the doors. Notice from the writing on the walls that this is Bay C. In the cell diagonally opposite the one you started in, is a passageway above the sink, Jump into it and push the block forward. Crawl through to the left. Go through and push the other block forward. Turn right and push the first block back to its starting position. Now there's a hole in the ceiling. Haul up through.

Run forward, long-jumping over the **barbed wire**. Along to the end, walk through the barbed wire and pull the switch. Turn left, haul up, walk left to the top of the ladder, turn, drop down backwards and grab, and start going down.

Before you reach the bottom there's a passageway to your left. Drop into it, turn around and follow it along to the end, jumping over the black square in the middle.

At the far end is another black square. With the source of light to your left, walk back on to this. When it collapses, run diagonally to your right (ignoring the shooting guard)

and hit the switch on the wall opposite the radar display.

This releases the prisoners into this area where they'll overwhelm the guard. Find the guard and get the **Keycard Type A** and a small medikit. With the transparent wall to your right, you'll see a gate.

Use the keycard in the slot to the right. Go into **Bay D**. Run all the way to the end and turn left. Hit the switch at the end and go through the door into the **washroom**.

At the far end is another switch and door. Go through. As you enter this room, you can see that there's a hole in the ceiling straight ahead of you. There's a movable block in here which, by alternate pulling and pushing can be moved round a column and under this hole. Do so. Climb up in here, jump over the pipe to your left and throw the switch

Back down into the now water-filled room and swim over to the farthest corner where there's another hole in the ceiling you can now swim up. Haul yourself out at the top, run down the corridor and jump right over the hole that leads into the flame-pit (actually it's the kitchen range from the canteens).

Follow the corridor around to the right and drop down at the end into the open air. Run all the way along here, jumping over the two barbed-wire pits on the way.

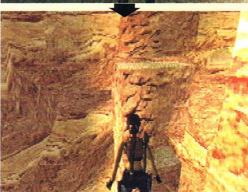
At the end go right and drop down. In this room is a switch. Flick it, but ignore the door it opens; instead go into the **yellow area** and hit the switch that turns off the kitchen range. Head back out and haul up where you just came from. Work your way back to the drop above the kitchen range.

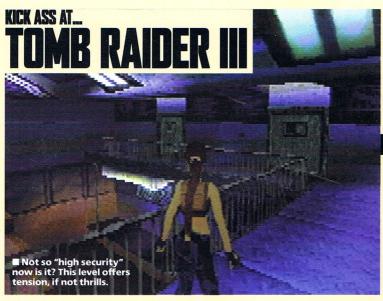
Drop down and run through the kitchen picking up the **small medikit** on the ledge to your right. At the far end is a switch which opens



■ The High Security
Compound offers few
problems with these tips.







the door there. Go through. There's a door to your left and right here. Open the one to the right first. Then the one to the left; an MP will come through. Lead him back to Bay C (the main prison area) where the prisoners will take care of him for you. Take his small medikit.

Go back to the door the MP came through. Throw the switch in this room and the grilles by the fan in the kitchen will open. Go into the kitchen. Climb up by the fans and carefully get the savegame crystal. Turn and face the middle fan, jump backwards, slide down and grab. Shimmy left and drop. Turn left and haul up into the crawl-space. Crawl through to the left. When you can stand up, climb up the ladder in front of you. At the top, shimmy left and drop into the corridor, Move along this dead-end passageway and one of the prisoners will throw a switch for you, above that opens the trapdoor at the top of the ladder. Get back on to the ladder and climb up and haul over. Welcome to Bay E.

Turn right and follow the passage along. Go right at the end, then left and climb up the grille in front of you. Haul up at the top and collect the small medikit to your immediate right. At the top of the big slope is a guard patrolling. Wait until he walks off to the left and then run up the slope and go to the right.

Head straight across the open area and through the gap with the silver crate to your right. Go left to the end and then right to a hole in the floor. Drop down on the left-hand side and keep going down into the passageway.

Flip the switch on the far side of the left-hand door and release the prisoner. Follow him back up. He'll take care of the MP for you. Pick up the Keycard Type B from the corpse. Go and use it in the slot by the door in this area. Go through and to your right, and collect the large medikit and the Uzi clips. Throw the switch in the room. Back out and through the gap with the silver

crate again. This time turn right, switch, go through the door There were laser trip-wires here but you've just turned them off. Run through and to the left to the hole in the floor. Turn round, jump backwards down and grab. Shimmy to the ladder and climb down.

Wait around a corner in this room until the patrolling MP goes away to the right of the exit. Run out and left, down to the end and use the switch to open the cell door on your left.

Two prisoners will rush out and do him. Over to his body and get the Yellow Security Pass and flares Head out into the large open area and run down alongside the fence to the right. At the end is an automatic sentry.

Before it draws a beam on you, duck into the last alcove on the right and use the Yellow Security Pass on the control box. Go through the opened door and down the passageway past the hangar. Left at the end and U-turn down.

Crawl down this passage so that the MP at the bottom doesn't see you. Go through the crawl-space to the right and follow it round. Drop down at the end and then right and run along. Drop down here, turn left and run to the switch at the end here. The guard will see you. Throw the switch and he'll be toasted by laser.

Turn right, jump over the laser beam and carefully go through the door and down the passageway into Bay C. Follow it all the way to the end where it opens into a large area. Turn around, then jump backwards, grab and release to get down safely. Turn around and go left and then follow the platform all the way round to the right.

At the end, turn left and jump down into the passage below you on the opposite wall. Follow this all the way to the end and drop down into the control room. Throw the switch at the far right of the window and watch the satellite dish move. Turn around and go to the far side of the room where there's a switch and a door. Throw the

and back right along the corridor, and down and around until you're back where you jumped across and then down to the passageway to the control room. From the end here jump up and grab the ledge and haul yourself up to the top where the satellite dish has moved to reveal a hole.

Fall down the hole and you'll land in some water. There's a current in here - to beat it swim forward into the middle and then up. Don't be tempted to pick up the egame crystal

Haul yourself out at the platform above. Turn so the wall's behind you. Now turn 90° left and jump across. Run up to the top of this slope. Turn right and run along to the end. Jump to the triangular platform. Slide down to the triangular platform below. Turn and jump to the square one. Long-jump to the far triangular platform

Right and jump to the exit. Crawl through and go out right. Stand and follow the corridor round. Pull the lever at the end. Work your way back and into the water. There's a tunnel out in the corner of this room; swim along it, picking up the small medikit on the way. To the end and turn left

Crawl through and wait until the MP passes to the left before coming out, standing up and running round right and following the passage left.

Through an open doorway there's a switch to the left that will close the door and trap the quard on the other side. Just round to the right from this switch is a ladder; climb up and haul over at the top. Next run forward and out into the base of the satellite dish tower Run round to the far side and up the ladder there.

At the ladder top, go up the passageway and right, the guard to the left won't notice you. To the end and right and haul up into the crawl-space and get the Yellow Security Pass from the end. Go all the way back past the base of the tower and down to where you locked the guard out. Go the other way to an observation room, use the Yellow Security Pass on the control panel, Now go back to the tower and drop down the hole in the middle.

Back in the pool of water, get a lungful of air before diving down and through the hole in the middle. Collect the savegame crystal. Swim along the passage, pick up the flares as the tunnel narrows.

Pull the lever after that. through the door, along and into a pool. Before you surface, swim to the left hand side to avoid the lasers. You'll pass a small medikit on the way in here that you can pick up now or retrieve later.

Haul out on to the platform and jump over the lasers to the platform on the other side. Go down and through the water here, swim to the end. Haul up to your left and crawl forward.

Out and immediate left, haul up on the crate here. Over to the far side of the crates, flick the switch and through the door. Collect the large medikit, pistols and Desert Eagle. Go back out, but remember - with goodies comes a trap. Notice those green lasers? Cross them for a murderous hail of bullets. Draw your gun and approach them carefully, then autotarget on the threat and take it out.

Back over the crates and run up the slope out of the main area. Have a gun ready. Shoot the MP. Up to the right and be prepared for three more. At the top of the slope is yet another, and he has a dog too. Pick up the Blue Security Pass from the corpse.

To the left of where you came up is a gate. By there is a small passageway into a dark room with a large medikit. Back out and right and right again to the top of the slope down. There's a ladder to the left. Climb up, U-turn round and use the Blue Security Pass on the door at the end of this passage. Through the door and into a room with two switches and an MP. The obvious switch to your right opens a gate and lets an MP and a dog in below.

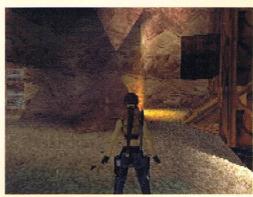
To the right again is another switch that you want to flick. This gets the conveyor belt going. Run out and down the slope to the conveyor belt keep going down to the left. At the end of the conveyor belt is a crate. Climb up on to it and haul yourself up on to the ledge via the short ladder. To the right is a ceiling grille that you can jump up and grab.

Go out into the middle of the room and turn right at the crossroads. All the way across and drop down. Haul up through the hole in the ceiling to your right and kill the MP. Get his Yellow Security Pass. Go to the other side of this room and get hold of the savegame crystal. Work back down to the floor below by the way you came. At the far side is a control panel on the rightmost of two structures either side of a gate.

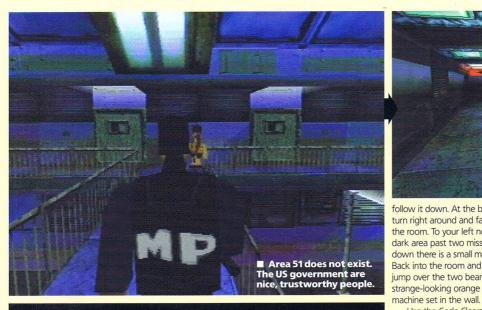
Use the Yellow Security Pass on the panel and go through the now-open gate. Run down and right, right again and out into an area with a truck in it. Shoot the MP. Run past the **truck** and up the slope to the left. Kill the other MP. Go into the warehouse. To the far right as you come in is a movable block; pull it out for an Uzi clip and a grenade. Over on the other side of the warehouse is a stack of crates with a hole in the middle with some Desert Eagle clips and a small medikit. Now go into the back of the truck (from inside the warehouse). Job done.







■ So many routes, so little time, so much ammo



ut of the back of the truck and climb left over a crate for a small medikit. Back out and run toward the main area. shoot the MP before he triggers the defences.

Go left to the far end and into the room to the left to collect an MP5 and two clips. Leave the switch. Run back to the hall and hit the switch on the right-hand wall. Go through the crawl-space, pick up the large medikit to your right and then haul up into the next crawl-space. At the end keep crawling out, turn left and once the lasers have gone behind you, crawl into the darkness at the end where there's a large medikit.

Turn round, crawl and follow the lasers back into the middle (lowest) part of the passage. When the lasers have gone back over your head, stand up and run to the ladder at the end.

Climb up, haul up and then haul up again into the next crawl space. Stop about halfway along and let the guard walk past the end (he mustn't spot you). The moment he's gone past crawl out quickly, get to your feet and drop him with the **Desert Eagle before he** gets a chance to activate the lasers.

Turn left and hit the switch. In the now open room is a prisoner - leave him be. Turn round. Behind the open door to the right is a small medikit

Go back out into the hall in the middle is another crawl space to the right. Go through here, get the flares. Forwards, haul up and crawl through again. On the other side stand up and admire the lasers and automatic guns that would

have killed you if you'd come the obvious route. Out the other side of this room, turn right and drop to all fours.

Crawl up the slope to behind the box on the right Draw your **Desert Eagle** without standing up. Pop up and kill the MP before he hits any switches. Climb over the box and go right to collect some Uzi clips and a rocket. Back into the corridor, around to the right and hit the switch by the double gates. You'll drop through the floor.

Prepare a weapon, run round to the left and deal with the sniper before he shoots or hits any switches. Two dogs will rush you. Just here is a green crawl-space containing a grenade launcher, Farther round are some shotgun shells lying on the ground. Around the central column of this structure is a pit with a grille walkway. Work round until you can see a switch, then go down and flick it. Run round and one of the corner grilles will give way.

Draw a weapon and deal with the onrushing MP. Walk around down here. Two crawlspaces have opened. One is a secret area with a save game crystal, get it.

Now crawl through the other exit. At the end, go right and get the MP5 clips. Now turn around. When you step on the grille on the other end of the "T", it will collapse.

Wait until the MP has walked underneath away from you before walking on to it. Drop down and then blow his brains out. He'll drop a small medikit for his pains.

Head down the corridor towards the orange end, throw the switch round the corner and help the prisoner take out the two MPs who come to see what's going on.

Now back up the corridor the other way, across the transparent floor to the end and take out the two

automatic guns to right and left (or save the ammo if you'd rather not). Turn back round, go along and then right into a crawl-space. On the other side there's a large medikit. Drop down in front and get the shotgun. Out into a corridor. left and down. At the bottom go left again, draw a weapon and rush the sniper at the end

Throw the switch near where he was standing. Back down the way you came. In the middle to the left is a tempting doorway. This is a nasty ambush. Behind double doors to the left and right hide two snipers. Draw your Desert Eagle and move towards the door. As soon as it slams shut start jumping backwards. Wait for the lock-on and fire three times. Lock-on and fire three times again. They should both be dead. One of them drops a small medikit.

Be wary of the snipers, even when they go down they'll keep shooting for a bit. In one of their hidey-holes is a switch that opens a crawl space in the other. Go through it, left and out, Charge through the alarm beams and get the MP who comes running down. Left and up, and go right at the top. Ready a weapon, there's a sniper ahead. Into the rocket room. Go right and drop down. Go right round the rocket, ignoring the exit for now. There's a ladder on the far side - climb it.

Get off on the sniper's ledge and collect the Code Clearance Disk from his body. Drop to the floor below, and go back up the ladder you first came down. Back down to the intersection and go straight ahead, following the way you've not been before

This opens out into the missile loading bay. Notice the automatic gun and the two green trip-lasers that make a cross. Avoid them while in the room. Go round the ledge you're on to the ladder and

follow it down. At the bottom. turn right around and face into the room. To your left now is a dark area past two missiles down there is a small medikit. Back into the room and then jump over the two beams to a Use the Code Clearance

Disk on it. Go and climb up on the platform with a swinging hook. Against the back wall is a dodgy looking grille. Climb up and through it, down a passageway, backwards drop, grab and climb down a ladder, then along a passageway for a savegame crystal

On the way back you'll have to shoot out the grille and this will alert the automatic gun. Dodge out of the way and let it calm down again. Once you're back in the room, it's an easy run past the hook to get the shotgun shells at the end.

Drop down and climb on the conveyor belt between the two pink lumps. Now you can long-jump across to the ladder between two rockets. Do so, climb up it and get off to the right at the top. Turn round. Over in the far corner is a sniper - kill him and get the Hanger Access Key (sic). Go back down, out of this room and into the rocket room again. Drop down and take the floorlevel exit out. Run past the hole in the floor and follow the passage-way around until you come to a control panel. Use the Hanger Access Key.

Go through the open door walking, with a weapon ready. Sneak up behind the MP on the train platform and kill him. Drop down where he was standing and go left. On no account climb on to the monorail - it's electrified.

Go left to the end, climb up the ladder and hit the switch in this room. Go back down and crawl underneath the rail. Go. right as far as the car and up the ladder to your left for shotgun shells. Back out to the edge and jump on to the roof of the car. Go to the front, jump up, grab and haul yourself up. Go along the passage. The first grilles are safe to walk over, the second set collapses. Jump, grab and cross using the ceiling. Time the laser to move away and drop down at the far end Go to the end of the passageway, jump to the ladder and climb down. Turn around and long-jump to the platform. Draw a gun and shoot the

guard. Jump down by the rail and get the shotgun shells. Back up to the platform. Take the long passage out of here, up the slope at the end and kill the sniper. Check out the UFO to your left. Along the hallway, jumping the three green triplasers. Left at the end and ready a weapon to take out the automatic turret at the far end of this stretch

Left again, climb up the crates and drop down. Round to the right, take out the MP and the sniper from the entrance. Into the centre and take out the automatic turret. If you didn't get the MP quickly enough, watch out for the vellow trip-lasers.

To get out of here you must climb the central control bank, jump up to two gantries and hit the timer switches. You want to go right and then left, as you face the entrance. The first time you flip each switch, a sniper will appear. Kill them. When you hit the switches a set of double doors opens. Through those, up some steps and a row of switches to the left. Kill the sniper lurking in this room first. Back to the switches, throw them all. Leave this room via a door behind the switches to the left.

Back through the control room and out where you first came in. Follow the passage all the way to the UFO, that you can now get to.

As you enter the **UFO** room veer right. There's a switch on the far wall, flick it, and climb up the ladder. Near the top you'll get a change of camera angle that will show a platform behind you; climb a bit more to be sure and jump off backwards. Turn around, pick up the shotgun shells and then work your way around the rafters anti-clockwise so that you can make your way to the iron platform on the other side of the room, from where it's an easy jump down on to the UFO. Pick up the Launch Code Pass.

Out of the UFO room and back all the way past the train area to the room with the hole in the floor next to the rocket room. Drop down the hole and open the door at the end with the switch. In the next room use the Launch Code Pass on the slot. A button is revealed. Go to it and get ready. Press the button. Jump back, jump left, jump back, roll and dash through the door and away

from the advancing flames.

Go all the way back up through the rocket room, up through the hole in the floor and back into the next level up from the rocket room. Take the ladder to the right, go all the way up, drop off at the top and kill the MP. Run round, use the switch and open the door. Crawl through to the crawlspace. Follow the rolling lasers in, stand up and jump over them as they come back. Run forward and crawl through before they hit you. Get the small medikit at the end and then take the passage out.

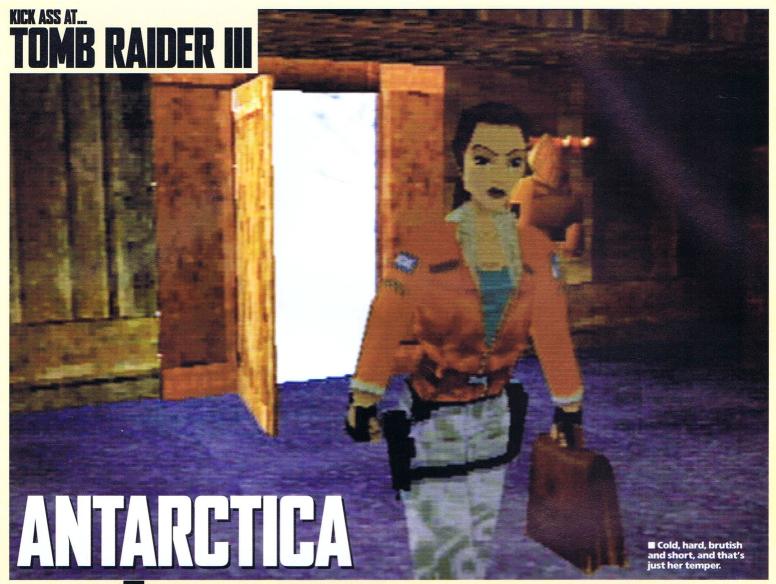
Round to the end, haul up and take out the guard on the tower ahead. Into the open air and there's an MP to your left. Run right and down the slope to the green light. There's a sniper down here; a grenade'll flush him out.

Grab the Code Clearance Disk from him. Throw the switch down here, back up and go down the hole by the guard tower. Pass the laser by running down after it. Ducking as it comes back and then running on and round the corner left. Drop down the hole to the left and you'll be back by the train stations. Out here, turn left and go back to the UFO room.

Run straight through to the other side and use the Code Clearance Disk on the console in the **Autopsy room**. Turn round and look through the glass. There's a door round a corner to your left to take you in there. Get the savegame crystal and a small medikit. Back out and through the other newly-opened door. Run past the killer whale tank, get the flares and Desert Eagle clips. Back into the UFO room, climb up the big ladder again and work your way anticlockwise around till you see a door you can long-jump through. Along the passage way, avoid the two lasers and head into the tank to collect the savegame crystal. Back out to the UFO room and get down to floor level. Go into the UFO and haul yourself up on to the next level. Kill the sniper who comes out of an exit. Go to where the sniper came from and haul up at the end. Ready a weapon - two snipers will come at you in here.

On to the raised dais in the middle and collect the Element 115, And that's it level completed.









ready to dive into the icy water in the direction of the clips you can see on the bottom. Before you jump, locate the platform you'll pull out at, right in front of the ship - you need to be quick. A proper dive will take you straight to the clips, swim over to the platform and haul out. Warm up. There's a place that from here is to the left of the metal box you started the level by. Swim over and haul out.

middle of the water (the bit nearest you is safe). Turn right and long-jump to the nearest corner. Head right and haul up.

Along to the slope up, turn left and haul up, turn round and long-jump to the top of the slope. Round to the right and jump across to the bridge. Cross the bridge and jump into the passage. Collect all the powerups. Back out, on to the bridge and back round to the left, then follow the path around to the right. When you come to the end, swim across to the obvious spot ahead of you. Haul out, walk forward and, when you're warmed up, swim again to the obvious platform

just to your left and to the rear of the ship.

Follow the path to the right and haul up at the end. Haul up again. Left, haul up. Jump up and grab the ceiling. Left, swing across, drop down and jump on to the **ship**. Over to the hatch in the middle and drop down. Down the slope, throw the switch, but ignore the door for now, head round to the right killing the sailor in front of you, and then the doing for the one who runs in behind once you're in the engine room.

There's a lever in here: pull it. Turn around, forward and down the newly-opened hatch, killing the guard on the way. Follow this corridor along to a T-junction where a guard appears from the left.

Carry straight on, hit the switch and go through the door. Hit the switch on the far wall. Go down either of the two parallel corridors and kill a guard at the end to get some clips. Down the hatch in here, draw a weapon, go round the corner to the left, roll, shoot the guard who's appeared behind and you'll find some Uzi clips. Turn around and haul up.

Move along to the end and hit the switch to release the dinghy. Turn back round and after you've gone back past the two parallel corridors, haul up. Follow the corridor round and use the switch to open the door. Out on deck and turn right and right again.

Down at the far end is a short jump from the back of the platform to a cave on your left. Go down for an MP5 clip and a savegame crystal. Back to the deck and round to the other side of the ship. Use the slide down here and work round to the dinghy, which is near the entrance to the level.

It's possible to get to the dinghy across the platform in the middle of the water here via a little triangular platform jump straight into it. Pilot the dinghy around to your right and all the way along the side of the ship. Go round the ship at the far end and follow the

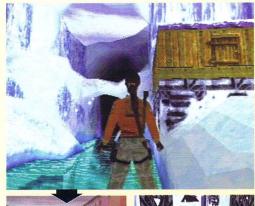
water round to the left, under the bridge and into the tunnel.

When you come out, moor by the flag, get out and kill the guard. Walk round by the water to the far end of the building and haul up on to the block round there.

From here there's a forward jump and grab up to the gantries. Do it, and swing along all the way to the end. Take the short section to the right before dropping down. Down the slide to your left and shoot the guard. Out at the far end and wait for the dog to attack you. On the diagonally opposite side of this area is an alley with some shotgun shells. If you want to, go and get them then return here.

Go through the doorway to your right and shoot the dog and the guard (who drops some clips). Follow the passage round and out. Hit the switch to your left and carry on left past the fuel tank. Keep going left and through the cave. Out on the open sand two dogs attack. Go carefully through the sliding doors - our fave method is to stand right in front of them and roll through, there's no faster manoeuvre. Go round and up to the left and kill the two quards; one drops clips. Into the room and to the left. First left is an office









area, hit the switch. Back and left round the crates, along to the end of the passage and climb up right to get yourself a Crowbar. A guard will come from behind you. Back through the building and the sliding doors - there's a quard here. Back through the cave and drop to where the pipe from the tank enters the ground.

Swim along to the end and haul out. Take the ladder up and follow the passage along. Don't worry about the water it's shallow. Turn the second and the fourth wheel as you go. Collect the savegame crystals and climb up the ladder at the far end.

Go through the door to the right and pull the lever to start the motor. Exit this building and head towards the fire. Go past it, straight forward and into the canteen. There's an RX employee lying in the corner here. Be careful when you go near him, he's not very well and capable of poisoning you

Go back out and turn immediately right after the fire Down the passage way and out, hit the switch to open the gate and release a dog. Into the area the dog came from, and another switch opens the way to two other dogs. Kill them and go through - use the switch and go through the door. Kill the dog in here and get the Gate Control Key from the raised section to the right. Kill the guard who comes out to investigate. Go back out of the building, through the gates and go left.

Go through the cave at the end and shoot the guard on the other side of the hole.

Across the hole and out to the right. On to the wooden bridge and shoot the dog below before dropping down to get some grenades.

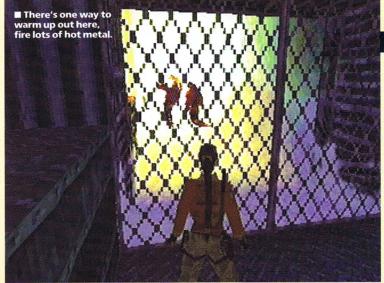
Up the ladder and go over the bridge. Follow the

passage round and you'll come out in the clearing with the tank again. Run to the left and back up the dark passageway. Right at the top and climb up the ladder to the tower. Pull the lever and use the crowbar on the door - don't forget to pick it up afterwards, though.

Go through the door and to the edge. Jump up, grab and swing across, Drop down through the hole into the office and run through - use the lever at the far end to open the door and kill the sentry to collect a small medikit.

Turn right and up the dark passageway again, go straight over at the end and back out through the cave to reach the gantries. Jump up and swing all the way over, then walk back to where you hauled yourself out of the water. Use the crowbar on the door (pick it up afterwards). Go in and use the Gate Control Key on the board. Flick the switch. Leave the building, get back in the dinghy and go through the now-opened gate. Along the water and dock by the flag. Jump out and kill the guard Get the Uzi clips and get back into the dinghy. Go along the channel. Around the next corner is another landing spot, get out here and get your hands on the shotgun shells.

Back in the dinghy and along the channel to the end where you get out again. Haul up forward and then haul up left. A guard is visible on the far side of the wire, and another one comes from the left despatch him. When he's dead go left and follow the passage round. When you get to the hole, the guard from behind the wire will come at you from down to the right. Shoot him and go down the slide there. Travel round the far side of the building, keep going round and suddenly the level ends



RX-TECH MINES

o right and haul up. Head through the crawl-space and move on out. Do a complete circuit to the left - when you come through the third door and hear another door open, turn around and go back the other way. Left at the end and through the crawl-space. Climb down the ladder at the other end, collect the MP5 clips, hit the switch and watch the grisly scene through the grille. Haul up to the new space, go round and out at the end, don't worry about flame-thrower man-

Follow the passage round to the mine cart room. Move forward on to the balcony. There are three ramps here leading to three carts. We'll number them 1, 2 and 3 starting from the far left as you stand here. 1 is along to the left, 2 is up the ramp just to the right of you and 3 is along to the right and down.

Cart 1) Hop in the cart. Up a slope and down to a jump. Up again and hit the brakes to slow down as you drop down a short, sharp slope before a bend. Down again and brake on the slope after the bridge and then let the truck go down a second slope, round a bend and over a jump.

Hit the signal and you'll stop. There's another flamethrower man here, but again, he's harmless. Collect the

savegame crystal

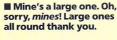
Go through the passage way, avoiding the drills (the roll is best). Go to the far end of this chamber, jump into the corner, haul up, crawl through and drop down to the right and get the medikit. Out into the chamber again and go down to the right.

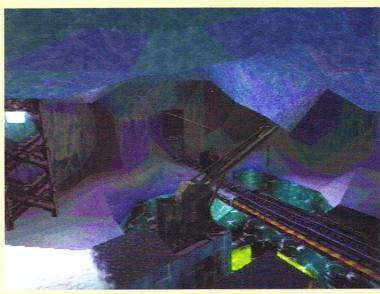
At the top of the slope. turn around and edge as far to your left as you can before sliding down backwards. Grab at the bottom, release and drop. From this platform, take a look just below you. To the right of the light is an entrance.

As soon as you go near it, a huge monster will emerge. Ready your best weapon and you're ready to go down.

Once he's dealt with drop down from this ledge to the path below. Walk to the end that's all snow, jump forward into the right corner, down the slide and grab at the bottom. Release, drop and haul up to the crawl-space to your left. At the other side, draw a gun and shoot the **mutant** below. Go back to where you let yourself in. Let yourself out, but don't drop, instead shimmy left as far as you can, release and grab the ledge below. Now shimmy right, drop down and kill the mutant below you. Haul up to the side here, and shimmy left. Pull yourself up at the end, but beware - you'll meet a mutant coming the other way down this crawl-space. Continue through and out into a large cavern. Don't do anything hasty, let the flame-thrower guy in here deal with the mutant first. Wander around in here for a bit and another two mutants will appear. Let your friend take care of them by leading them to him.

Climb on to the structure above the pool and get the crowbar. From here there's a fairly difficult route out Point back to the end of the structure on land, Just to the left is a **peak** that you can jump to. From the far end of this is a running, turning longjump to another peak. Go all the way along the summit of this one to the very apex and it's another running, turning long-jump. Go along to the end, climb the ladder and drop off left. Crawl under the drills and out into the crushing room. Go past the first machine and climb up a ladder to the right. Off left at the top and run past the next machine. Haul up, do it again and haul up to the left at the end of the room. Left and up again, and up a series of giant steps. At the top, shoot the mutant in the passage to the right, pull up into it, along to the end, drop down and, after you slide, run back to the cart. Get back in.







Up a long slope, down and over a jump, then haul on the brakes for the corner. Hit the signal, let your speed build up for a jump, duck under three bars and haul on the brakes for a bend, and back into the mine cart room. Now back toward the level entrance, pausing only to use the crowbar on the door to the right to get the **Lead Acid Battery**. Now you need to do cart number 3.

Cart 3) (Don't worry, 2's on its way.) Down the ramp to the far right and kill the mutant that's on the wrong side of the tracks. Get in the cart, up to the top of the slope, duck twice and hit the signal. Down the slope, duck and over the jump. Up the other side, duck down a slope and stop at the bottom. Get out of the cart and get the savegame crystal. Now go down the obvious passage. Hit the switch to the left and go through the doorway. Follow the passage round and down left. Slide down backwards at the end, grab and release at the end to drop down safely. At one end of this passage is a grille, at the other another over-size mutant leaps out from the right. When he's dead, go down the way he came, follow it round until you come to a crawl-space to the right. Go up it and crawl around under the floor of the passage way you just had a fight in.

Another big mutant leaps out on the floor above you – he'll have to wait. Collect the assorted **goodies** down here and crawl back out.

After your mutant's dead, continue down the corridor and right. At the end, there's a ladder; climb up and get off to the right at the top. Go to the farthest door and hit the switch. Along to the right and crawl through right. Drop out at the end, ignore the door here for the moment and go into the room - vou'll see a huge mutant appear at a window seconds before he comes crashing through the door - he drops some Uzi clips and a small medikit when dead. There's also a **Desert Eagle** clip in here. Through the open door, flick the switch on your left and out into a cave. From the slope down to the pool it's a relatively easy swim to the flares and Desert Eagle clips on the ledge opposite, and back.

While in the water you may notice the **Winch Starter** on the bottom. Getting to this is

probably best started with a dive from the side of the winch, as you'll get down to it quicker, It's also difficult to pick up - just hold down the ⊗ and eventually you'll grab it. Back out of the pool, through the room and to the door by the ladder. When you hit the switch another huge mutant comes at you. Open the door at the far end, jump over the hole and use the **button** on the left to open the door leading back to your cart. Get in and use the brakes down the first slope. Up the slope, duck and then hit the signal. Through the savegame crystal and back down into the cart room. Get out and go back to the balcony. Now do cart number 2

Cart 2) Up the ramp, go past the mine cart to the right and cautiously into the office: there's a light switch to your right and a mutant to your left. Back out and into the mine cart. Just let it go on this first stretch, up, down, over a jump and up another slope, and duck to avoid the drills. You emerge in a large chamber, so pull on the brakes and get out. In the corner (to the far left from where you came in) is a jump to some flares.

Go to the platform by the winch and use the Lead Acid Battery on the panel, then use the **Winch Starter** on the back of the winch. Now look down into the pool and get ready to do some extremely hard diving.

You can see the **diving bell**, but before that is a light
and a passage by it. Dive down
and go through that passage,
haul out at the end and warm
up. Now dive again and go
underneath the bell and back
up into it. Warm up again. Light
a flare, locate the **green lights** below you and dive
down There's a hole in the
middle of the metal panel – go
through it, quickly hard right,
locate the surface and go for it.
Haul out where you can.

There's a medikit here, which is nice. Back in the water, roll and shoot off to the left and up. Get the all-important savegame crystal and haul out at the top.

You're in a huge cavern, guarded by a flame-thrower man. Cross the bridge, kill the mutant, throw the switch by the big door and go through to **finish the level**, or hunt around in here for goodies – the choice is entirely yours.



LOST CITY OF TINNOS



■ Damn their damned gas attack, it's just damned damnable.

hrough the door and into the Lost City.
You're in a square.
Go left. Ignore the opening in front of you for the moment and go up the ramp to your right. Drop down at the top and climb the ladder to your left.

Haul up at the top and follow the passage all the way round to the right, along and right again until you come out at an intersection with a lever. Pull the lever.

Head down the dark passage to the left of the lever and left just before the end to a ledge above the square. Take a step back and jump forward on to the pillar.

From the highest point long-jump, grab and haul up to collect the savegame crystal and rocket. Jump off backwards, grab and drop.

Back up the slope and through the passage that's opened between the two columns. In an alcove to the right is the Uli Key. Head back to the square, and all the way left to the keyhole near the double doors. Use the Uli Key and go through the opened passageway. Up the ladder and drop off left at the top.

Turn left and pull the lever by the grille. Turn around, take the first right, and drop on to the ledge left. Pull the lever to your left. Haul back up the way you came and go straight over and down the slide to your right. Go round to the right at the bottom and drop down into the room. Straight across and pull the lever. Out of the now-open double doors and back into the square.

Go diagonally all the way across the square, through the opening and up the **ladder**. From left to right, hit switches 1,

hrough the door and 2 and 5. Drop down off the into the Lost City. ledge and through the open You're in a square. gate. Out on to a bridge.

From high up to your left come a seemingly inexhaustible supply of wasp-like insects. Stick a rocket in their nest. At the break in the middle of the bridge, turn left, long-jump and grab across to the savegame crystal. Turn back to face the bridge, go along to the end and jump up to a hard-to-see platform to the left. Forward to the edge and jump, grab and haul up to another. Now long-jump, grab and haul on to the

Drop backwards, grab and release to the left to drop to the bridge.

top of the bridge.

Along the bridge to the **rockslide**, and there's a jump to the left and a passage with a small medikit in it. Out, over to the other side and there's a drop down to a rocky passage.

Follow it round to the left and back to the bridge. Two very tough demons will come out at you; good luck. Go through the main doorway, avoiding the two swinging censers. Go into the temple entrance and there are three more wasps to deal with. When they're gone go left (as you face in to the temple). Run along the corridor and through the doorway to the right. Drop down left and follow the corridor round to the end Pull the lever and go through the door. Go up the ladder to the immediate right and go round to the end.

Drop off backwards, grab and haul yourself back up. This will trigger yet another blue **fireball-spitting** demon from below. Use your height advantage to polish it off.

Now run back over to the ladder, jump across to the opposite side and do the same thing again. Back to the ladder, down to floor level and just one more to go. This little monster comes out of the gate opposite. One of the alcoves





has a lever in it (to the left of where you came in). Pull it. Now climb up the carved block. Jump and grab the platform and up on to the ledge. Run around, jump over the drop and go through the crawl-space on the far side. Go past the **censer** on this ledge The easy way is to drop off backwards, grab, shimmy past it and haul up. Then long-jump past the other censer (wait until it's as far left as it can go before starting your run). Go through the crawl-space for flares and Uzi clips

Go back out through the crawl-space and drop down to the right. Across the bridge, climb up the block at the end ignore the lever (1) down the passage. Turn left, jump forward, grab and haul up. Through the crawl-space and pull the lever (2).

Go back out and long-jump diagonally to the ledge. Do the crawl, pull the lever (3) and back out again.

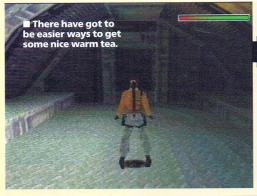
Go down to the right to the block in the corner and long-jump across. Jump forward again and drop down to floor level. Pull the lever (4) that's just above a block.

Turn left, haul up, jump forward, grab and haul up. Turn round, jump forward, grab and haul up. Pull the lever (5) and fall down. Work back up and pull lever (3), then come out, down the two blocks to the right and jump over to the platform in the middle of the wall. Now it's a sideways jump from the middle of this platform to the platform underneath the bridge.

Now jump up, grab and swing over to the lever on the far side. Pull it, turn round and jump to the new platform to the left. Jump, grab and haul up on to the bridge. Go back to (3) and pull it again.

Work down to the floor and go through the open doors into a large chamber dotted with **statues** and blocks. In the middle to the right and also in the near-left corner lurk two of the enormous demons, tempt them out and deal with them





(the blocks help as cover). In the near-left corner chamber is a ledge with a Uli Key. In the fai-left corner is a little chamber with a ladder that goes up.

Climb it and drop off left at the top. Pull the lever, use the Uli Key on the keyhole and go through the gate. Go past the energy beam to the right and up some stairs. Go into the corridor to the left - a gate slams behind you. Down to the end and into the quicksand.

Take the right fork, and keep to the right all the way round. When you've gone about three-quarters of the way round, there's a little passage off to the right. Climb up at the end and go left up some large, rough-hewn steps.

At the top you come into a chamber with two paths off, take either (they meet up again in a second) and watch out for the wasp at the top, Carry on round to the left, down a slope and round a sharp left corner into a flame-lit chamber Into the room at the end and get the Oceanic Mask.

Go all the way back out, dodging the falling rocks and taking care to take the left path and jump the lava pit.

The guicksand has now disappeared, leaving a deep pit, so from the bottom of the steps, long-jump over to the far side, then jump right to a platform and long-jump to the right again

Now you're back in the passage, jump to the ladder. Climb down, along the passageway at the bottom and haul up, then go down the slide. At the bottom it's censer-dodging time again.

Once you're past them, pull the timer lever and climb up the ladder guickly

Turn round, wait for the trapdoor to move back up and go toward the gate - it'll open. You're back by the energy beam. Put the Oceanic Mask in one of the slots, and go back up the stairs

At the top. U-turn and head toward the beam along the cross-shaped platform. Jump to the left-hand span and middle and go through the through the door - a gate shuts behind you.

This is the way to get to the action: from the first intersection go right, left, right, right, left, second right, left, right, left, left, right, right and right up a slope. At the top is a rolling barrel action puzzle Haul up to the left. As soon as



you step on the sandy-coloured on, light a flare and into the slope, the barrels start rolling toward you - you must avoid them by leaping the gap back and forth. Just jump right and left, and you should be all right.

Get the Oceanic Mask at the top and use the exit that opens. Go down the slide into a **pool** of water, dive down and through to come up in a familiar corridor, Find your way back to the energy beam and place the mask. Back up to the cross-shaped platform and take the exit to the right. Down to the end and go backwards over the edge and grab.

Time your drop through the blades and swim down the hole in the middle of the pool. You come through into a chamber with four exits ahead of you and there's more blades in front of them.

Swim through the left one and surface. Then pull the lever and swim back out. Swim through the right one and up to a chamber, right through two blades to an exit, down and along and pull the lever.

Back the way you came, right across the room past all six blades to the exit on the other side and the surface. Haul out get the Oceanic Mask, collect the savegame

crystal and pull the lever. Swim back through the room with six blades, down to the lever and into the crack just by it Right and down and you'll come out in the first room you entered. Go left and surface in the first pool. Haul out in the crawl-space on this platform. into the water and down for a much-needed medikit. Go back out, dive down into the water through the hole in the bottom of the pool and take the bottom of the four exits. Go right at the end and let the current help sweep you out. You surface in a passage. Wade

water on the other side. Follow the passage until you come out in a room with a lever. Pull it and fall through the trapdoor. Back to the energy beam and place the mask. Now to the final doorway off the crossshaped platform. Through here is a fire puzzle.

Light a flare and climb on top of the stone block and you'll be shown a map that's on the ceiling. The blobs that are shining show the route through. Memorise it (or make a map) and get down. Now do the jumps. The first two are long-jumps, the third a longjump and grab. When you land on the third one, the flames go out on the block to your rightthe only one that's so far been burning. Quickly jump over and get the medikit and shotgun shells, before long-jumping to the last. The second block in is a trapdoor, fall down it. Down here is a fiendish puzzle

The blocks you have to leap across only appear when they're having fire breathed on them, and just before, although they're actually there all the time - they're just transparent.

Stand on the platform edge, jump forward and grab. Wait until the fire is about to disappear before hauling up and jumping and grabbing again. To get to the final one you have to do a long-jump and that has to be timed perfectly.

You may find it helps to do a roll while you're waiting for the gate to open, it'll get you through that little bit quicker. After all of that, getting past the censer is child's play. Get the final Oceanic Mask and go through the exit.

Back to the energy beam. When you put the last mask in place, it stops. Drop through the hole created. Down the slide and on to the last level



METEORITE CAVERN

you start face-toface with a massive spider-like mutated creature. The best weapon for this is the Desert Eagle, Straight from the start shoot the boss six or seven times, then start running. It moves at the same speed you do, unless you sprint, so do this for a while. turn around, and blast him a few more times. After 13-14 hits the boss will collapse. Use the time here to sprint down the nearest tunnel and pick up an artefact. Now put your gun away, and sprint back down the tunnel, just as the boss starts moving again. Repeat this tactic until you have all four artefacts. Kill the boss one more time and he will explode.

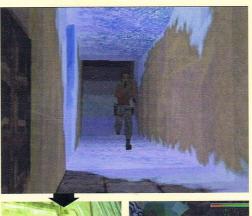
he final level sees

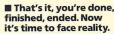
Okay, that's the hard bit out of the way. Now you have to get up to the top of the crater. Do a running jump and grab on to the ladder you can see by one of the tunnels.

Climb up, shimmy along to the ledge, and pull yourself up. Take the first left passage, and when you can run no further, crawl along it. Hop up to your left, and walk carefully along the ledge. When you emerge into the chamber turn immediately left and look up. See those funny lines?

You can shimmy along, so jump up, grab, then swing along them, dropping on to the stone platform. Turn right, and walk right to the edge. Turn right again, and look at the stone block sticking out. Do a running jump to it, turn around to your right, and climb up to the ledge.

Walk to the inside edge, and look across to another stone platform. It seems miles away, but you can make it. Take a leap of faith, then jump and grab the snow ledge in front of you. Climb up here, run past the block, and go down the slope. Get your guns ready as you run around the passage, and kill the five guards - being especially careful of the one with the flame thrower. Pick up the ammo they drop, and run forward. Hit the switch on the left wall and turn around. Run down between the buildings, by the open gate, follow it around, and run up to the helicopter. Congratulations! You've just finished Tomb Raider III! Now what are you going to do for fun?







The nights had been long and painful, our eyes were bloodshot and our fingers were raw, but we'd made it. The finishing touches had been put to Arcade 1. Someone read through it to make sure there weren't any spelling mistakes, and we sent it to the printers by the fastest means of transport known to man (the back of Arcade Designer Alvin's moped). Yet, as we stood outside the office in the cool, crisp midnight air, waving Alvin into the distance and toasting "A Job Well Done" (with a can of Pepsi bought by Staff Writer Mark), I couldn't help but notice a strange, sick feeling in my stomach as if there had been some terrible

mistake that no one else had noticed. Worse still, a mistake that was my fault. The team hugged and traipsed off home for a well-deserved night's rest, but sleep was the last thing on my mind.

Weeks past. Arcade 1 appeared on shelves in the more discerning newsagents around the country.

The phone rang... The phone rang again... And again...

A letter arrived.
Ten more letters arrived.

Someone demanded their money back.

The cheats we printed for Tenchu didn't, it seemed, actually work. They were for the Japanese version (or something). Hadn't we better, it was politely suggested, get some new ones. Someone, it was politely suggested, ought to be fired. Someone, it was politely suggested, better get his act together pronto. Gulp. Here they are, then...

CRACKING CODES

Unlock all hidden items

On the Items screen @, @, @, @, @, Right, Right, Up, Left, while holding the R1 button.

Increase item inventory

On the Items screens (a), (b), (a), Right, Right, Up, Right, while holding the L2 button.

Restore health

On the Pause screen @,@,@,@,Right, Right, Up, Left. Unlock all levels

On the Mission Select screen @ , @ , @ , & , Right, Right, Up, Right, while holding the R1 button.

Enable Enemy Layout Selection screen

On the Mission Select screen @ , @ , & , & , Right, Right, Up, Left, while holding the L2 button.

Enable Ayame Sexy Armour (You must play as Ayame).
At the Item Selection screen with armour displayed as an option. Left, Left, Down, Down , , , , , , , ,







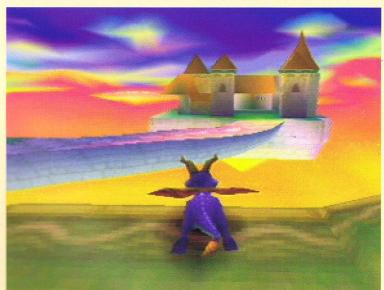






■ So, now we've satisfied all those millions of gamers who own the, erm... Japanese version of *Tenchu*, we can show just how caring we are with the beauties for the UK version you can read on the left.

SPYRO THE DRAGON



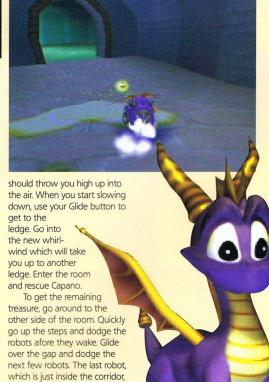
■ Contrary to popular belief, dragons are not "Ons" who like to wander around in ladies' clothing. They are in fact highly qualified "Agons" who have received doctorates.





I liked Spyro the Dragon when I wrote the complete solution to it back in Kick Ass Arcade 1, but I'd be blowed, buggered, jiggered and shagged if I could find the third dragon in The Haunted Towers, Luckily, you lot out there were all too keen to prove my ineptitude, and wrote in in your droves, (and by "droves", I mean Richard Snow of Nottingham, Phil Gill of Sussex and Deborah Lee of Reading). Thanks to them, here's what to do:

Save the game at Lutulo in the door in the tower. Run down the arrows until you supercharge. At the bottom, in the room with all of the doors, go into the second door on the right. This should lead you to the ledge with the pond in it. (you should still be supercharged.) Keep to the left, close to the building, and jump across to the other ledge. Head up towards the whirlwind (still supercharged). Run forward into the whirlwind, which



will try to block you, but will

not kill you. Run past this robot

very fast on the right side. Go

through the door and there

and kill the remaining robots.

will be a red fairy. Kiss her

SEEDS OF EVIL

Let's be up-front and honest here, one of our most talented staff members is in fact a six-foot cardboard cut-out of the boy Turok himself. So ever since Turok 2

arrived in the office,
we've been
blathering on
about getting
him to write
some tips for
the fantastic
four-player
better-thanGoldenEye
deathmatch. But then
Acclaim sent us some,
which saved him the
bother. So, here they are

then. Enjoy.
Without a doubt, Acclaim's Turok 2 boasts one of the most utterly rollicking and bloodthirsty deathmatch modes in all of N64 history. But it doesn't stop there. Multi-

player Turok 2 offers several different competitive and cooperative games across 12 expansive levels. You can even decide whether or not your weapons can harm your teammates during co-operative play. We think they should.

- BLOODLUST enables up to four players to enter into a hardcore, kill-or-be-killed tournament. The only real rule is that, well, you've got to live to walk away when the dust settles. Bloodlust offers both Team co-operative play and Time Limit play.
- FRAG TAG places you into another every-man-for-himself setting. In this scenario up to three opponents have to try and pound you into mushy, bits before you reach a checkpoint. If you make it, you can tag someone else as "it" and pick up a big gun.









■ It's Deathmatch Wonderland in *Turok II* as you get to guffaw at the notion of co-operative play. While you could play as a team-member, you could also go down local pool for some synchronised swimming action.

THE CONTENDERS

Here's a rundown of the characters you can choose from in multiplayer mode; weapons you can use; and some strategy and tactics.

Turok

The Coyote Knight 100 health

As you'd probably expect The Coyote Knight is perhaps the most balanced of all multiplayer contenders - and rightly so. Our hero is agile, strong and handy with weapons. When using Turok, keep in mind the game's distinctive allowance for you to get the drop on opponents from ledges and other heights. This is especially helpful when the dude you're up against is ten feet tall.Remember, once you've used up your ammo, you've got to find yourself a new

weapon. Adon

Speaker of Forever Light

60 Health

Don't let Adon's relatively low Health fool you, this lady's one of the fastest multi-player

characters and her mystical abilities mean she regenerates Health rapidly. Hang back with Adon, stick and move with long-distance weapons, and you'll find good things come in bioelectric packages.

Gant

The Cold One 80 Health

This ruthless dinosoid employs a force field that can take quite a beating, effectively pushing his Health into the higher strata. However, he's not invulnerable, if you beat on his shield hard enough, it's like cracking open an ovster - but be quick. He can regenerate Health, but not as fast as Adon.

Flesh Eater **The Death Guard** 120 Health

When it comes to game balance, this living horror is closest to Turok in terms of speed, strength and how much punishment he can take. If there is a downside, it's that Flesh Eater is a bit slower, but this is a vulnerability that is counter-balanced by his relatively high Health.

Sloth

The Risen One 150 Health

The Primagen somehow reanimated the putrefied corpse of this hulking Pur-Linn, making it the most maggotridden of the contenders. Sloth regenerates Health at a slow but steady rate. In fact, "slow" pretty much describes this beast, he's the slowest multiplayer character here. Of course, he has by far the most Health to start with, making him one of the most powerful.

Endtrail

100 Health

This vicious and cunning fighter's jumping capability is second only to that of the Raptor. Learning how to use this skill can make the Endtrail the contender of choice for the more nimble (and brutally heartless) of Turok 2 players.

Fireborn

80 Health

Two things make this contender unique. The first is its regeneration capability; while it's not the fastest regenerator, when its Health

does start to come back, it won't stop at the Fireborn's current 80 capacity, Instead, the Fireborn can regenerate up to 110 Health, making it potentially more powerful than it was to begin with. The Fireborn is also immune to fire, making it capable of safely traversing the lava which exists in some multiplayer levels.

Raptor

120 Health

Possibly the nastiest contender, the Raptor is one of the fastest in multi-player, It can jump the fastest and furthest In fact, the only thing that keeps this monster short of unstoppable is that it can't pick up any weapons. That's right it can only engage enemies in claw-to-hand combat, making it a natural target for long distance firepower. Still, practice with the Raptor's speed and agility, and you'll be able to run down an opponent before they get off a second shot.

Joshua Fireseed

Civilian Identity

100 Health

When Joshua Fireseed isn't

blowing away beasties in the Lost Land as Turok, he's an NCAA baseball All-Star at Oklahoma College in Oklahoma City. But don't let the jeans and T-shirt fool you - this guy is the same dinosaur hunter you know and love, and he doesn't need the bone washboard and high-tech sunglasses to prove it. Essentially, this is the same character as the Coyote Knight outlined at the beginning of this section. The good people at Iguana just wanted you to have an opportunity to throw two of him into a deathmatch.

Campaigner

120 Health

Until Primagen came along, this dude was the baddest of the bad. Yes, the main villain from Turok: Dinosaur Hunter returns to duke it out with his old nemesis once more - and this match ain't gonna be resolved in a friendly game of baseball. Though not quite as omnipotent as he was at the end of the previous videogame, Campaigner is still plenty potent. In fact, his combined Health, strength and manoeuvrability make him one

of the most powerful multiplayer contenders

Tal'Set

The Valiant One

110 Health

When polled about who would win in a fight - the older, more experienced hero from Turok: Dinosaur Hunter or the younger, snarkier protagonist of Turok 2: Seeds of Evil - many of you said that Tal'Set would whip the tar out of Joshua Fireseed. Well, here's your chance to find out. It can't be denied that Tal'Set has more muscle mass than his greatgreat-great-great grandson, but Josh does edge it over the Valiant One on overall agility. In either case, here's your chance to revisit one of the Nintendo 64's greatest heroes of all time.

Monkey

Moving target

Finally it can be told, the rumours are true. You can be the mysterious and ever-elusive Monkey from the original Turok: Dinosaur Hunter. Why on earth would you want to and what's with the fanfare? Your guess is as good as ours.

WEAPON TIPPERY

Because there's not much of a sniper element in the available weapons, we recommend you find and use the Scorpion launcher, especially if you don't have the best aim. We feel it's the strongest weapon in multiplayer, and it has splash damage, so you don't have to be a marksman to use it. Blast 'em and move.

Hunt down the grenade launcher, especially if you're up against a much tougher opponent. You'll like it, it does massive damage.

The Firestorm cannon is number three on our treasure hunt in multi-player. It's fast and sprays easily.

As soon as your opponent switches to Cerebral Bore, run like hell. If there's a clear path between it and you, you're meat. Head for more complex terrain, like brush or corridors and dart back and forth as you run. You can actually make the cerebral bore "tired" and it will eventually stop chasing you.

Using the Scorpion launcher, you can "rocket jump". Just point at the ground, start to jump and shoot. The resulting concussive force will propel you three times higher than just simple jumping. You will take a little damage, but it's definitely worth it in a pinch, and it's guaranteed to make your opponents' jaws drop in dishelief - and blood











Come on mate we can work this one out there's a Nobel Peace Prize in this for us if we can sit down and look at the issues from a rational point of view there's really no need for guns'n'ammo is there we can make the world a better place... ahhh shite, eat this ya pussy!

THE WEAPONS

Your choice of weapons in Turok 2 multi-player mode is a bit more limited than in Quest mode. The reason for this is at least partially technological. If all the weapons were offered here - including some with elaborate optical effects - the combined animations in a fourway split screen would slow things down a bit, and that would be unacceptable. Also weapons like the Nuke would pretty much end things for everybody right away, and we wouldn't want that either. Available in all Bloodlust and Frag Tag games are: crossbow, charge dart rifle, assault rifle, plasma rifle, Firestorm cannon, Cerebral Bore, grenade launcher, Scorpion launcher and the torpedo launcher

The crossbow and assault rifle take the places of bow and shotgun respectively, from Quest mode.

The differences are that the crossbow gives you unlimited ammo and its power level is pegged somewhere

between the bow and tek bow; the assault rifle returns from the first Turok game, it's a slightly more powerful version of the shotgun.

It's tougher to snipe in multi-player. Iguana took the lock off the scorpion launcher, the crossbow does not have a sniper mode and neither does the plasma rifle. It was decided that sniper-lock capability in this mode of play would simply upset the balance.

Also, you have to remember (if you want to stay alive) that in multi-player mode, when your ammo runs out, you lose the weapon, so keep track of your supplies and hold your crossbow handy.

Finally, some of the higherpowered weapons obviously make for a quicker kill. If you want a longer, more suspenseful multi-player match, turn off the big-bang weapons and go at it with the basics after all, how much skill does it take to kill an enemy with a cerebral bore?

CLOCKING OFF

■ Phew. To be honest, I'm Write to us at: all tipped out, now. In fact, I think I'll go home. Can I? Thanks. Next month we've got... Y'know? I can't even bear to think about it just quite yet.

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Your host | Sam Richards

Every couple of weeks the Arcade editorial lowlives meet up for an evening of serious drinking and fighting. This time the evening was punctuated by the best deathmatch shoot-'em-ups the videogame world has to offer.

ou materialise in a dark room. It's eerie, dank and it smells. Over the swell of spookily-bowed strings, you can just make out the sound and stench of an acid pool bubbling. A disjointed primal roar becomes audible in the darkness. A film of cold sweat begins to form on your forehead. Yes, my living room on a Games Night is very similar to the first level of Quake. The acid pool? That's the decomposing pizza someone left behind the sofa after the last event. The primal roar? That's Mark burning his mouth on a hot onion bhaji. The spookily-bowed strings? Well, I just made that up for effect. But you get the picture.

So here we are again, ready to contest the Games Night crown, and this time there's no room for the foolish, the feckless or the faint of heart. Deathmatch shoot-outs require speed, guile, nerve and unerring accuracy - qualities difficult to maintain at the best of times, let alone after a crate of Prague's finest lager - but the Games Night panel presses on, undeterred. Literally, this will be a fight to the death.

You may be thinking that the true home of the deathmatch shoot-out is on the PC, where games such as Doom, Quake and Unreal defined the first-person 3D shoot-'em-up genre. These were the first to make use of network capabilities and on-line gaming in order to facilitate multi-player contests. It's true that many of the shoot-'em-ups available on the consoles are resolution-reduced versions of PC games, but the spirit generally remains intact. PCs, however, simply aren't compatible with the Games Night mindset; lending themselves to desks and coffee rather than sofas and beer. Still, enough scene-setting; time to begin filling each other with lead. Or poison darts. Or rockets. Or toilet plungers. Or that thing that makes your brain spurt out of your ears.

8.20pm Doom, PlayStation (GT Interactive)



Having banned PC multi-player gaming from Games Night because beer and hassle curdle when mixed, it's acknowledged that setting up a two-player deathmatch in Doom is still no picnic. You'll need two PlayStations, two tellies, two copies of the game and a link

cable, as well as a certain degree of patience to get you through the





As with any deathmatch, much relies on your knowledge of the level and your success in the race to find the best weapon (usually the rocket launcher). However, ammo is in short supply and even rockets can be dodged by a skillful opponent. A sixth sense suggesting where your opponent is likely to turn up is handy, especially in the more labyrinthine levels, although the way some of us are playing (Mark particularly keen on obliterating himself by firing a rocket in a confined space), a first sense would be a start.

Mark: "When I interviewed Thresh, he was going on about multi-player deathmatches being the new spectator sport, so we can see if he's got a point." [Mark interviewed Thresh – aka Dennis Fong, the world Quake champion – back in Arcade 1, and hasn't stopped dropping his name into conversation since.]

Neil: "Well it's not exactly the World Cup final, but it is kind of compelling."

Mark and Rich pick up the joypads and start things off. May the first battle of the evening commence...

Mark: "Ooh, there're dead bodies everywhere. That's not very pleasant." Rich: "There you are! Come back and let me shoot you! You're running off like a pansy!" I've just got to find a better weapon so I can come back and smack you up."

Rich: "You've got a bigger telly, Mark, so it's easier. Plus when you've got a good weapon you just stay still.

Otherwise you just run off like a girl."

Otherwise you just run off like a girl." **Neil:** "Yeah, let's have some man-on-man action! Hang on. Don't quote me on..."

Too late. Eventually, the concept of a finite ammo supply proves too much for Mark and he finds himself unarmed and reduced to fighting bare-knuckle. In the spirit of fairness, Rich discards his weapon but still wins the ensuing slapping battle. The next round lasts for a tense ten minutes before the players finally meet, Mark letting out a surprised whimper as Rich unexpectedly appears behind him while he is complacently loitering in the spot where he found the rocket launcher.

Rich: "I'm not playing against this simpering wuss any more. He's a *Doom* goalhanger and when anyone appears he starts whimpering like a baby."

Mark: "Just wait until GoldenEye, Pelley."

Following this little display of bravado, Neil justifies his billing as pre-match favourite by fragging all-comers, although a cheating scandal threatens to spoil the contest. My living room doesn't have enough space to position the TVs back-toback, so Neil and Rich are attempting to steal hurried glances at each other's onscreen location.

Rich: "I was just peeking over because Neil had his hair cut today and I wanted to see what it looked like close up."

Neil: "Pelley, you're a cheating bastard." **Rich:** "But you're trying to kill me!"

This being the point of the game, Neil does indeed kill Rich and proceeds to wallop me 5-0, racking up an unhealthy "glance count" in the process.

Neil: "I'm crap at all the other games we're playing tonight, so can I be the King of *Doom* please?"

Sam: "Yes Neil, you can be the King of *Doom.* Now go and get us all another beer."

9.47pm GoldenEye 007, N64 (Nintendo)



There's somebody at the door. It turns out to be Robin, Arcade's Reviews Ed, who earlier the same day totally, absolutely and





■ You may think you're "it" with a pistol in your hand, but any moment now someone's going to tear your head off with a rocket.







■ Ah, Mr Bond, I've been expecting you. And now I'm going to pin you against the wall with a rapid volley of gunfire from my RCP-90. Live and let die, as they say.

definitively insisted he didn't want to be involved with this evening's Games Night because he is "too busy doing loads of far more important stuff". "I've come to borrow a cup of sugar," he murmurs sheepishly, although evidently he just wants to drink beer he hasn't paid for and play GoldenEye.

Frankly, we can't blame him. GoldenEye is one of the few games to have a multi-player mode so carefully tailored that it's as sharp and stylish as the single player game. Even with the screen split into four, there's none of the blurry edges that blight Quake and even Turok 2, and there are so many options when it comes to levels and weapon types (anything from throwing knives to rocket launchers), that it's difficult to know which to choose first.

Mark urges us to select the Licence To Kill mode in which one shot kills, but although this would undoubtedly heighten the tension of the evening, it would also mean that Mark - who knows every level with greater familiarity than he knows his own parents - would win every time. However, it proves that even the opportunity to spray bullets from an RCP-90 isn't much help when Mark (playing Bond, naturally) manoeuvres himself into a position where he can kill everyone without them seeing him. The stench of death fills the air, and the only man left alive is Rich, who has been stuck in a room for five minutes because he hasn't worked out which button opens the door.

Robin: "I love this game, it's great. But I'm going to go home again if Mark keeps winning."

Mark: "See, I told you when it came to GoldenEye I'd make you all cry."

Mark then proceeds to shoot Robin's Natalya character while he's paused the game for a toilet break.

Neil: "That's not the chivalrous Bond we know. What is this, Licence To Be An Utter Bastard?"

Mark: "Tell you what, I'll give myself a handicap so you can all have a chance."

Rich: "If you don't stop being a cocky shite, I'll give you a real handicap."

We all take our petty revenge on Mark and conclude that *GoldenEye* really is master of the deathmatch genre. It looks fantastic and the gun battles are furious – even if the inclusion of a radar precludes the kind of pant-wetting tension provided by *Doom*.

GoldenEye really is master of the deathmatch genre. It looks fantastic and the gun battles are furious

10.42pm Turok 2, N64 (Acclaim)



The original *Turok* game was muchloved, but there was much bemoaning its lack of a multi-player option. While it was a

The joypad jury

Four men armed to the teeth and gasping for a frag.

■ The Arcade office was quiet. Too quiet. For weeks now, the tension had been building. Four men, one grudge. But who would leave the room alive?



Mark
He's the man with the plan and a mouthful of obscenities. So psyched that even in these times of peace, he's still going "commando".
Calm down ladies...



Rich
Arcade's muscle-bound
monument to
testosterone. He's got a
licence to thrill, if he
could only work out
how to open an
unlocked door.



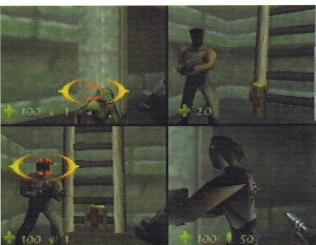
Neil
He's the Doom-monger and the dungeon keeper. He can sniff out your exact location using his sixth sense (or by cheating – he's happy either way).



Creeping through the shadows like a stealth assassin, it's Arcade's very own man of mystery. Or is he just a complete coward? You decide.







■ Turok 2's deathmatch enables you to amass the kind of arsenal which would send UN weapons inspectors into paroxyisms.







■ N64's *Quake* may not be as grand as the PC version, but we still chewed on its broomstick many times. Thresh didn't like it, but then his real name is Dennis. The big pansy.

blast to train those deeply unsavoury weapons on the mewling mutant dinosaurs, what we really wanted was to tear the heads off our mates and use them as footballs. Developer Iguana listened to the pleas of the people and lo, *Turok 2* is an answer to these prayers.

The game is certainly less of an immediate pile-in than the other deathmatches we're playing tonight. The weapons are distinctly odd and it takes a while to get accustomed to their idiosyncratic effects. Like the one which fires a blue electric ray, forcing the recipient to dance around like a hyperactive bodypopper.

dance around like a hyperactive bodypopper. **Rich:** "The method for changing your weapon is strange. This game is confusing." **Mark:** "Where's the map? I just want it to be like *GoldenEye.*"

Rich: "I keep ending up with the crossbow. Bollocks."

Neil: "Look, look, I'm making him dance!" (breaks into chorus of the Bee Gees' *You Should Be Dancin*') **Mark:** "How do I stop the dance?"

Eventually, Mark finds the cerebral bore and forces Rich's character's brain out of his head, a move greeted with much applause. In desperation, Rich accuses Mark of cheating by looking at his corner of the screen, until we point out that this is unavoidable. In truth, *Turok 2*'s deathmatch is a little chaotic because the levels are small

and the weapons powerful and plentiful. **Neil:** "I didn't like it – maybe because I didn't have time to get into it. It's not like *GoldenEye*, which is pick-up-and-play."

Mark: "It's a greedy game. You have to go round amassing an arsenal so that the other players can't get the weapons."

Rich: "I think *Doom* is all about speed and who can get to the best weapon first. *GoldenEye* is more strategic because you can use the map and hide in corners. *Turok 2* is tense and you have to understand the weapons. I didn't enjoy it at first, but it's definitely a grower."

11.20pm Quake, N64 (GT Interactive)



Rich: "Before we go any further, can I ask how they came up with the word 'frag'?" Neil: "It's a military word. They use it in

the US Marine Corps. You see, I coulda beena Lieutenant."

So we still don't really know what "frag" means, but with the vague idea that it's some kind of military jargon, we can start *Quake*-ing. The game was created by id software, who also produced the earlier *Doom*, and to all intents and purposes the two are rather similar. *Quake* is the game that revolutionised multi-player gaming on the PC, but its console equivalent is viewed as a poor relation. In fact, the world's most famous *Quake*-head was particularly disparaging about the transformation...

Mark: "When I told Thresh I'd played N64 Quake, he laughed like a drain." Rich: "It's Thresh this and Thresh that with

you, isn't it? When's the wedding?"

Like trying to play GoldenEye confined to one arena while wearing thick-lens specs and leaping about on a pogo stick

Neil and Rich's two-player battle (there's no four-player option here) collapses into giggles when they think too hard about Thresh's real name – Dennis Fong.

Neil: "He was a normal boy called Dennis, who lived an everyday life – until he sat down at a PC and became Thresh! It's just like Bananaman."

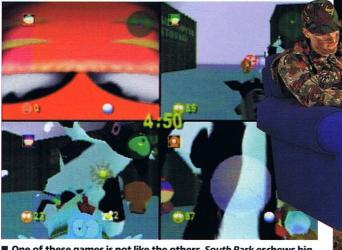
Mark [desperately trying to change the subject]: "I think Quake's multi-player levels are really well designed. There are loads of passages and there's a good spread of weapons and armour."

Neil: "Thing is, knowledge is power in this game. If you know the levels well you're always going to win."

A comment tasting suspiciously of sour grapes as Neil hasn't won a single game against any of us.

But while Quake is undeniably entertaining, it's a little rough around the edges and doesn't quite scale the same levels of tension and excitement as the other games we've played so far. Our abiding memory is of the amusing tenor of the onscreen captions, particularly "Player 1 chewed on player 2's broomstick" and, following an unintentional dalliance with molten lava, "You turned into hot slag." These seem to





■ One of these games is not like the others. South Park eschews big guns in favour of comedy — and fails dismally.

trigger a lever in Mark's brain, turning him into a foul-mouthed misogynist, celebrating the lack of girls involved in this month's Games Night and deciding that *Arcade* ought to cover more "man's stuff" from now on.

Rich: "Better not let Mark have another Hooch, or he'll go wild."

12.08am South Park, N64 (Acclaim)



At last, a game whose characters accurately reflect the level of obscenity uttered by the Games Night panel. As Kyle,

Stan, Cartman and Kenny waddle aimlessly around their smalltown backwater environment, pelting each other with yellow snowballs, toilet plungers and Terrance & Phillip dolls, they fill the air with words of the type usually strongly disapproved of by your mother. This is really funny for about five minutes, but soon becomes tiresome when its full awfulness really hits home.

Rich: "This is actually terrible. I can't see where I am and I don't know where I'm going. The whole screen is a vague blur."

Neil: "The weapons are funny but the game is so random, it soon becomes tedious. It would be good if you could press a button to activate the swearing."

These are sure signs of a game built around novelty amusement value instead of good gameplay and for a few minutes we're happy as pigs in a mudbath. We've no idea

quite what's going on, but we're amused by the Alien Dancing Gizmo which, when fired, forces your opponent to apply makeup and waltz around in a '40s-style. As soon as we attempt to apply our deathmatch skills to the game in order to win, we're lost. It's like trying to play *GoldenEye* confined to one arena while wearing thick-lens specs and leaping about on a pogo stick.

As for deciding the winner, we would have saved a lot of frustration if we'd drawn lots beforehand. The fact that each character becomes invincible for a few seconds after being hit means that you have to completely pummel an opponent in order to score a kill. Eventually, Rich finds the cow-launcher and catapults an unsuspecting Friesian at the rest of us during a point-blank three-way snowball fight in the corner. We can only thank him for putting us out of our misery. Mark: "To guote Ned Gerblansky, I'd rather shove shards of glass up my behind and sit in Tabasco sauce than play that game again." Rich: "South Park, you've stolen 30 good minutes of my life, and I want them back."

A plaintive and hopeless cry. Suffice to say we didn't like this game very much. Half an hour ago we were pumped to the point where real fights were breaking out as a result of our console battles. Now the *South Park* experience has left us tired, emotional and reaching for the hard liquor.

Mark: "Why is that I'm totally exhausted, my eyes hurt and I never want to play another game again?"

Ah, and that's the way we all feel after another strenuous Games Night which has

weary minds and bruised trigger fingers. Frankly, we're all fragged.

Rames Night picks

once more tested our skills, endurance and

patience. In the deathmatch war, there are

no winners, only battle-scarred losers with

So we've eaten enough lead to poison a small

So we've eaten enough lead to poison a small nation. But what have we learned?

1) Graphics do count. You need to be able to see your surroundings in as much detail as possible in order to play the most exciting games of cat-andmouse. It's no fun when players emerge out of the fog right in front of each other. Doom and GoldenEye 007 were by far the best games for this. 2) Comedy weapons à la South Park are great for a bit, but they do need to have noticeably different effects in order to maintain interest. Noone's going to confuse Turok 2's missile launcher with the marvellous cerebral bore, for example. 3) The range and power of weapons are also important.

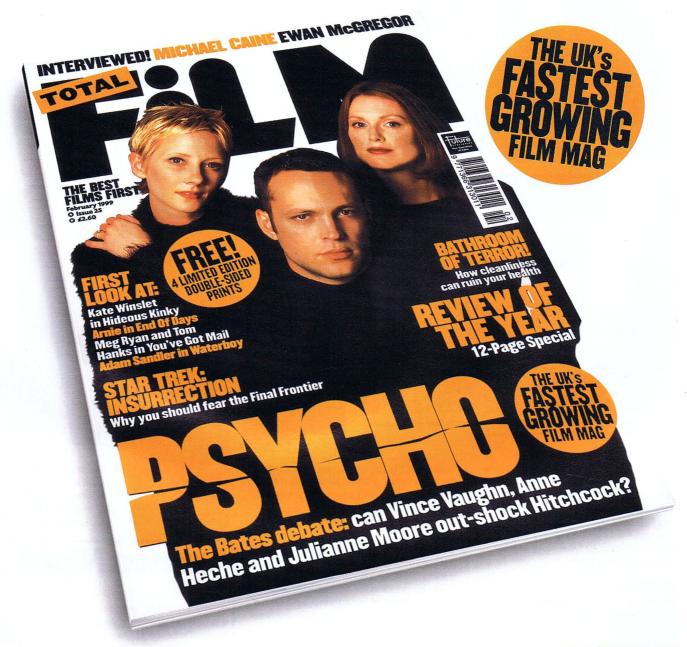
GoldenEye is the most versatile of the games we played, and the weapon options it offers make for longer battle lengths, if that's what you want Turok 2's abundance of huge weapons makes for short explosive deathmatches, while in Doom and Quake there are generally one or two rocket launchers per level which it's advantageous to pick up before your opponent gets them. 4) However good your general deathmatch skills, you're always likely to fall foul of a player who knows the levels inside out. This is true of Doom's intricate mazes, while GoldenEye's radar map makes for a more democratic battle.



The Winner GoldenEye 007

There's no doubt that this N64/Rare offering is the best deathmatch shoot-'em-up available for console. The number of levels. characters, weapons and battle modes are enough to keep you going for months, while the clarity of the scenery is astonishing even when the screen is split four ways. This makes for truly skillful deathmatches, rather than the random blastouts that the other games are occasionally reduced to.

ONSAL











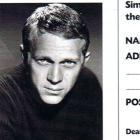












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February 1999 The Ultimate CE

Akuji the Heartless Apache Havoc Blood II: The Chosen Devil Dice Fallout 2 **Godzilla Generations** Heretic II **Kensai: Sacred Fist Knife Edge Max Power Racing NFL Blitz** R4: Ridge Racer Type 4 San Francisco Rush 2

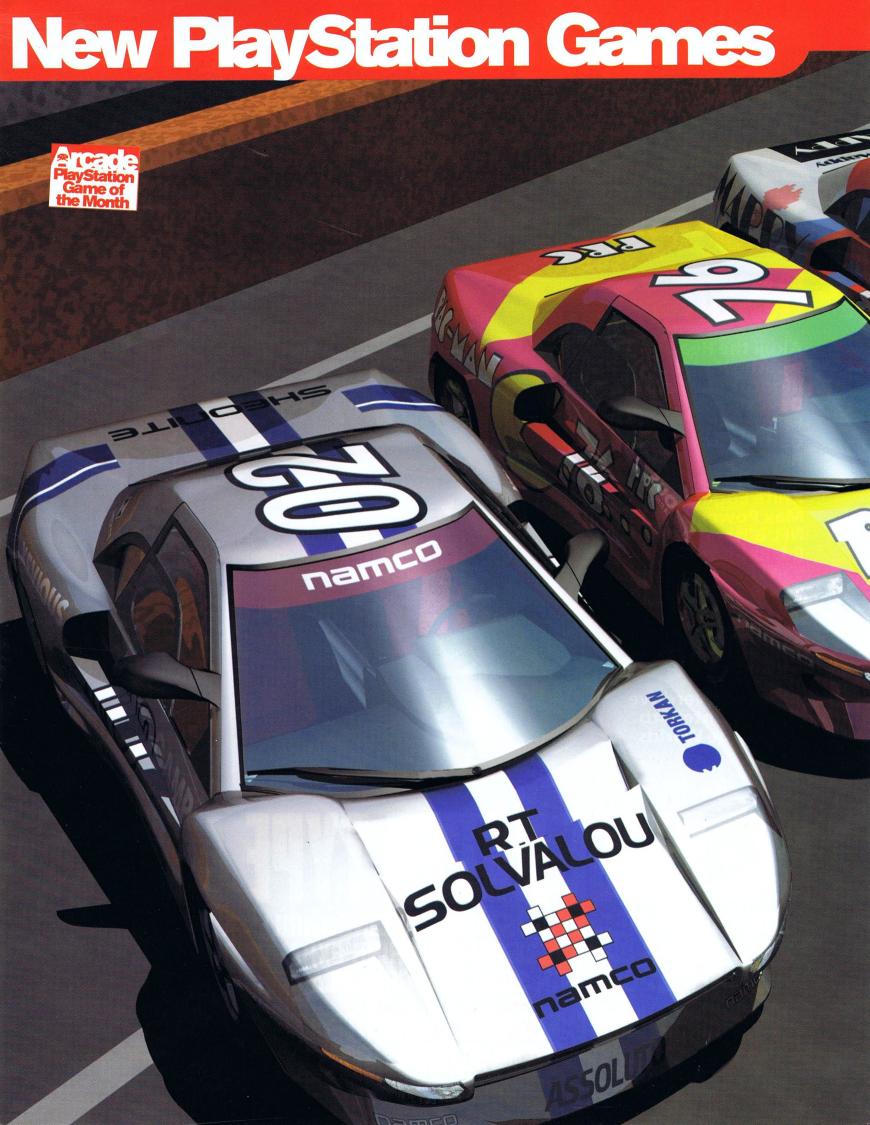
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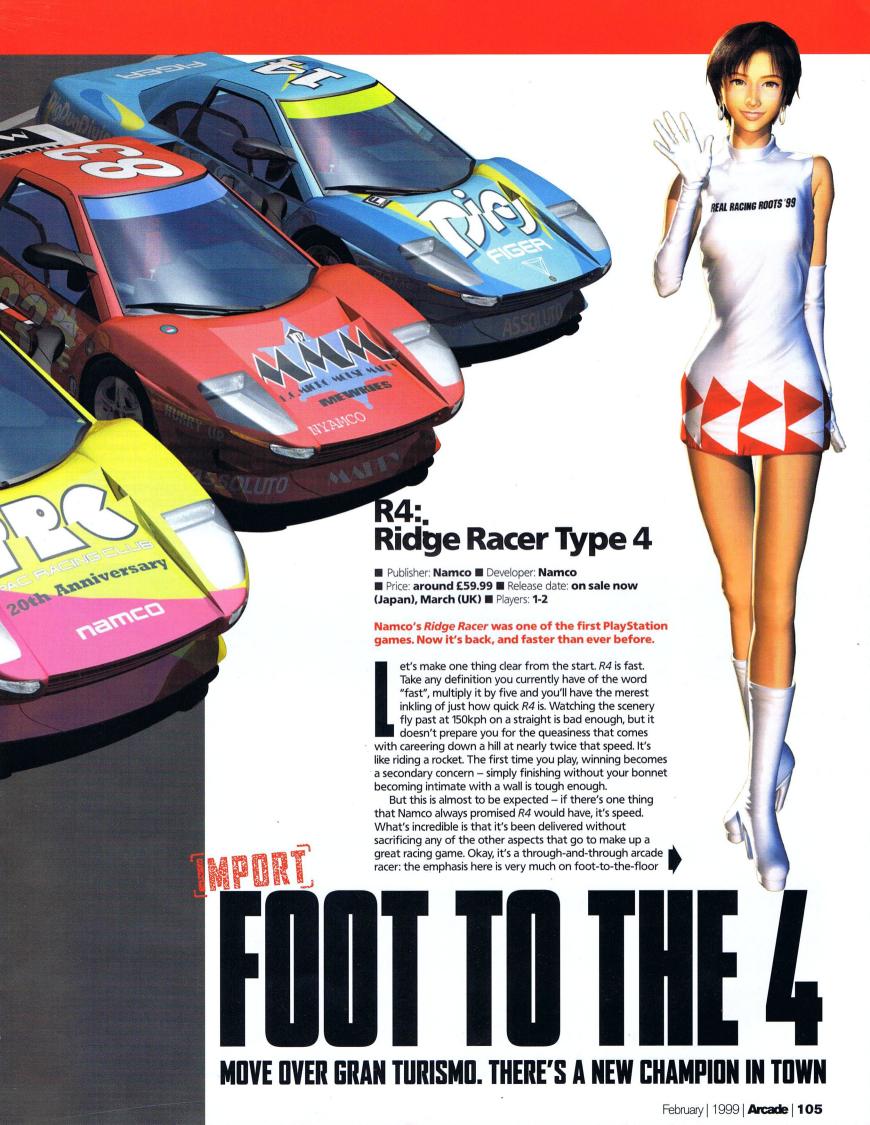


PEDAL-TO-THE-METAL PLAYSTATION RACING THRILLS AS NAMCO'S LATEST LEAVES GRAN TURISMO COUGHING EXHAUST PLUS TIGER WOODS, HAN SOLO AND GODZILLA. IT'S A MONSTER.

Star ratings

MORE THAN





New PlayStation Games





■ The Pac Racing Club car provides a nice historical link between Namco old and new.

THE SPEED AND SMOOTHNESS W WHICH THE TRACK FLIES UNI YOUR WHEELS IS FRIGHTEN

all this going



pyrotechnics as opposed to an ultra-realistic simulation. But as arcade racers go, this is the complete package.

So let's take a look at what *R4* delivers. First, the graphics. If you really want to appreciate just how far the series has come, turn your attention to the bonus disc which contains the original *Ridge Racer* in an updated 60-framesper-second form. Watching the hilarious 2D aeroplanes and

cardboard box buildings float by is the *Ridge Racer* equivalent of a slap in the face; waking you up to just how much *R4*'s visuals improve on its prequels. Namco has made 1995's

state-of-the-art look like the friendless and neglected coinop tucked away in the corner of the chippie.

No course has dodged the magic polygon paintbrush. From the skyscrapers towering ominously over the city highways, to the dirt tracks weaving their way through the Japanese countryside, there isn't a single point where the graphical realism lets up. But it's mainly in the details where *R4* excels. Helicopters buzz overhead, billboards come alive with early-'80s coin-op images and phosphor trails appear from cars' rear headlights as they hurtle across your path. With



on, it's easy to get carried away with R4's looks and convince yourself that they're the reason why you're enjoying the game so much.

But no matter how breath-taking the graphics, they've only a supporting role to *Ridge Racer*'s main attraction – it's racing thrills. The course of its history, from the original *Ridge Racer* in the arcades to *Rage Racer* on the PlayStation, has been concerned with speed – rocketing down straights, powersliding through corners and overtaking one car at a time to get a taste of the victory champagne. These games have turned their noses up at gear ratios, tyre changes and the foot-on-the-brake school of corner-taking, concentrating instead on getting from start to finish as quickly, and with as little hassle, as possible.

Thankfully, *R4* is no exception, and Namco has pushed the PlayStation to its absolute limits to ensure that it's the most exhilarating installment of the lot. The speed and smoothness with which the track flies under your wheels is

frightening, stretching your reactions to the limit as you try to slide in and out of corners that appear more quickly than your brain can register. To make things even more testing, the use of the brake is practically outlawed – R4 dictates that only easing off the accelerator slightly is permitted, unless you enjoy watching your competitors sticking up two fingers and disappearing into the distance.

In this way, with each of the eight

Grand Prix tracks giving you only four attempts to secure a high enough finishing position, every race becomes a heart-pounding battle against relegation. Your eyes will be darting maniacally as you come out of a straight at 300kph and attempt to powerslide around the corner, without giving the car behind the







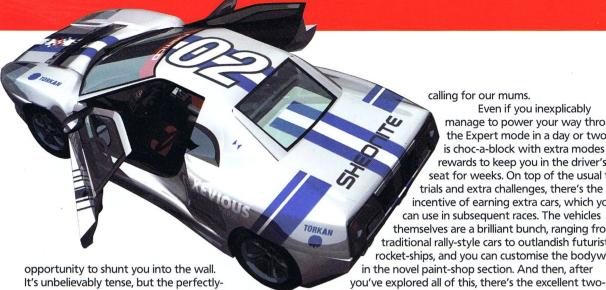








Another incredible Namco intro. Ridge girl and Arcade cover star Reiko Nagase thumbs a lift from the shiniest car in the world to get to her job as race starter.



tuned controls make the process as painless as possible, and the moments where you do manage to

Uppers & Downers

Faster than you

imagine
■ Tons of cars to

get your mitts on

Pace maker ■ The computer cars will annoy

vou with their

■ Surprisingly easy to begin with

Not out in the

UK until March

brilliance

Pace car ■ Graphics to make your TV blush

could ever

storm past some poor sap on the final approach and secure first place make it all worthwhile.

Don't feel guilty about such tactics not only do the computer cars always come off best in collisions, they hate your guts, too. If they're not trying to subtly nudge you off the track, they'll be driving so blindingly fast that making one mistake will mean you going home with the wooden spoon. Namco has even used that cruelest of programmer's tricks; the false sense of security. We polished off the "normal" difficulty setting in less than an hour, but by the time the fifth race on the "hard" setting had arrived, we were

calling for our mums.

Even if you inexplicably manage to power your way through the Expert mode in a day or two, R4 is choc-a-block with extra modes and rewards to keep you in the driver's seat for weeks. On top of the usual time trials and extra challenges, there's the incentive of earning extra cars, which you can use in subsequent races. The vehicles themselves are a brilliant bunch, ranging from traditional rally-style cars to outlandish futuristic rocket-ships, and you can customise the bodywork in the novel paint-shop section. And then, after

player mode - probably where you'll get most value of out of the game.

Ultimately, though, it's Namco's fine-tuning that makes R4 such an addictive experience. It may not offer

the gorgeous video replays or comprehensiveness of Gran Turismo, but every aspect of the game feels right, resulting in a racer where the only barrier to better performances is your own ability. This is the way it should be. And even though hurtling around one circuit of R4 will shatter your nerves and leave your reflexes in a state of permanent spasm, you'll find yourself always stabbing at the Start button for just one more go. **** Mark Green

YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF ALWAYS STABBING AT THE START BUTTON

FOR JUST ONE MORE GO

What's an import?

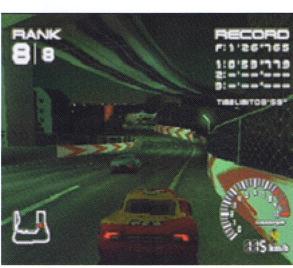
■ Although you'll find plenty of specialist games shops willing to sell you a copy of *Ridge Racer 4*, the game's not officially released in the UK until March. The version we've reviewed here and the version you'll find on sale is imported from Japan. You won't be able to play it on your UK PlayStation unless you've had your machine "chipped" – a process that alters its innards so it will play foreign games. This costs around £20 (just ask at any games shop), or you can t for March. The decision, as they say, is yours.

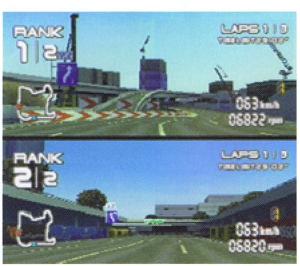






■ From the track select screen to the glare of the car's tail lights, R4 is a classy, polished-beyond-belief drive. You have to look really hard to notice the tiny fall in detail in the split-screen two-player mode. Although we'd like to road test it more, we'd put it ahead of two-player Gran Turismo for foot-to-the-floor, head-to-head battles.





RECKON YOU'RE MEAN ENOUGH TO TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE?



■ Extras: Memory card

Konami, creator of the majestic Metal Gear Solid, focuses its expertise on the brutal world of beat-'em-ups. The resulting game is one of the PlayStation's best kept secrets...

yson or Ali? It's a simple question. But when it comes to deciding whether brute force or skill is what makes a fighting game great, beat-'em-up fans quickly develop a split personality. The truth is that they want both. Fighting games have to be vicious and filthy enough to make us want to scrap in the first place, but they can't be coarse little cheaters if they're to keep our interest in the long term. So far, only Tekken has appealed

TREE PLAY

to both sides of our nature on PlayStation, but now *Kensei* hopes to join this exclusive club.

Kensei is the strong, silent type. It's got a spectacular range of counters, throws and grabs up its sleeve but, unlike Tekken, it doesn't boast about them. Throw a few punches and pull off a few kicks and you might not be that impressed. Graphically, it can't match even Tekken Mark 1 for flash effects, although the speed and crunching impact of most moves is hard to fault. Believe us, though, you're barely scratching the surface. Dodge to one side of an opponent as they wade in and suddenly all manner of grapples, side-stepping attacks and throws become possible. A quick look at the training mode will convince anyone of Kensei's prowess as characters spin each other round, snap necks, pummel kidneys and generally assault each other with wild abandon.

One-player mode is a minor revelation. For those who have completed *Tekken 3* in a day, getting a drubbing from one of *Kensei's* sub-bosses is a chastening experience. You'll find that the boss characters actually learn your tactics and counter appropriately so that one combo, or even a few choice sets of moves, won't get your character to the finish. Even completing the game with







a couple of characters is no excuse for turning into a smug git. Changing from the lithe Yuli to

Steven Seagal-clone Douglas is like swapping your Porsche 911 for a monster truck.

Tactics and tricks that you've learnt with one fighter don't apply across the board, so it's back to the school of hard knocks, until you find new ways to win.

All this wouldn't matter a damn if, like so many other *Tekken* wannabes, *Kensei*'s appeal faded after a couple of day's play. That it doesn't is down to a lot of hard graft on the part of the game's

creators – Kensei has been tweaked and tweaked until it's got a better sense of balance than the fittest of ballerinas. If trying to expand the

IT'S GOT A BETTER SENSE OF BALANCE THAN THE FITTEST OF BALLERINAS

cast list from eight to 20 fighters in Normal mode will keep you busy for a week or so, then the Survival and Time Attack modes are the ultimate one-player challenge. Of course, you can get other people involved in your high-score attempts but, like all the best videogames, setting yourself new targets is what these modes are all about.

Kensei is almost too efficient, too svelte and well engineered for its own good.
Compared to Tekken 3 or even Dead or Alive it lacks the same showmanship and pizzazz. At times it's dour, even humourless, too concerned with the serious art of fighting to crack a visual joke. Yet, after the ridiculous mega-moves of a zillion scantily-clad, fantasy fighters, being brought down to Earth with a bump by a game as addictive and deep as Kensei has to be a good

thing. ***

Pete Wilton

Or you could try...

Tekken 3
Namco ****

Namco ***

Graphics to kill for and lots of depth make this the lot of the best.

Tekken 2
Namco ****
The finest fighter for those on a budget.









Stings like a bee

Brilliant blocking and

Brilliant blocking and counters

■ Real 3D moves ■ Superbly challenging

Crushed like an ant

■ Looks workmanlike

■ No sense of humour■ No lovely renders

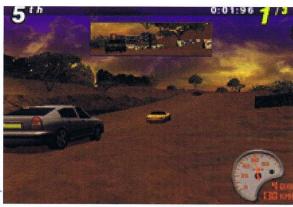




■ Kensei won't win any marks for flash graphics or fancy intros, but it's fluid, well animated and very fast. The differences between the slow fighters (such as Douglas) and the quick ones (such as Saya) are very noticeable. You'll have to adopt different tactics if you're to win with both.

New PlayStation Games







■ Max Power's tracks look stunning, but they go on and on and on. And you're driving a Nissan Micra.

SUPER FURNY DICE CAN THIS BOY RACER GO ALL THE WAY?





■ Eventually you do get the chance to race some very fine motors, but initially you're stuck with granny's runabout.

Max Power Racing

- Publisher: **Infogrames** Developer: **Eutechnyx**
- Price: £39.99 Release date: on sale now Players: 1-2
- Extras: Analogue controller, Dual Shock-compatible, memory card

The maker of *Total Drivin'* played *Gran Turismo*, took a deep breath, and tried to better it. *Tried...*

his game, you understand, was until recently called C3 Racing. At the eleventh hour of development, Max Power Racing Magazine (the Day-Glo and tacky boy racer's mag) was roped in as a "big name" to stick on the box (it being marginally more eye-catching than "C3"). As it turns out, this was quite a suitable marriage. Which isn't to suggest that the resultant offspring, Max Power Racing, is a Day-Glo and tacky racer, but rather that – like the magazine – it may well only

appeal to the racing mad.

Max Power Racing's problem is simple: when compared to the best racing games PlayStation has to offer it just doesn't match up. It's clear that Eutechnyx has taken a good look at Gran Turismo – you've got your night stages, car tuning and replays – but as soon as the race begins it quickly becomes clear that it doesn't play like GT. At all.

But if GT is the F1 of PlayStation, then Max Power Racing is at least the support race. Arguably, the headlight effects

YOU'LL DO BATTLE IN THE CAR YOUR GRANDMA USES TO DRIVE TO SAINSBURY'S in the night stages are the best you'll see on the PlayStation. The cars, from souped-up Renault Clios to speedy Toyota Supras, look stunning. The scenery is okay (albeit quite angular and strangely reminiscent of *Tomb Raider*).

But it shoots itself in the foot in a couple of crucial areas. First, it's little *too* realistic. Clip any corner, tree or indeed car, and you are penalised far too heavily. The ultimate sin — missing a corner and careering down a sheer cliff-side — means early death in the Championship mode and signals the end of the race. One strike and you're very much out. This just isn't any fun.

Second, most of the tracks are beautifully designed, but are ridiculously long and occasionally difficult to follow – there's no such thing as "a quick blast" on *Max Power*. And sadly, the 30-tracks selling point is a bit of a whopper; most are simply longer or reversed versions of the originals.

Of course, the true test of the racing game is the splitscreen two-player mode. *Max Power Racing* copes extremely well, albeit with just two cars ever appearing on the wide tracks. Perhaps more frustratingly, initially you can only race with a Clio or Micra. There are other cars to unlock later, but if you are without either a memory card or time,

you'll do battle in the car your grandma uses to drive to Sainsbury's. There's nothing wrong with longevity in a game, but this is ridiculous.

Like the tennis at Wimbledon in World Cup year, Max Power is doomed to be eclipsed by Ridge Racer4 et al. But just as Tim Henman will be remembered for his ultimately futile semi-final battle against Sampras, so Max Power deserves a mention for at least having a damn good go. ***

Uppers & Downers

Max ■ Familiar, realistic looking cars

looking cars
■ Beautifully
designed tracks

■ Not in the same league as GT or R4
■ Sluggish and glitchy at times
■ Too difficult

R4: Ridge Racer Type Four Namco ***** On sale officially in the UK in March, but also worth chipping your PlayStation for.

Gran Turismo
Sony ****
Go on, dust it down just one more time. You know you want to.

A COOL HERO, BUT HIS HEART JUST ISN'T IN IT...









Actor Richard Roundtree is the main voiceover artist for Akuji. Don't recognise the name? He played Shaft in the eponymous movie. On the theme of movies, developer Crystal Dynamics claims that the film Angel Heart was one of the major influences on the feel and mood of the game.

Akuji the Heartless

■ Publisher: **EIDOS Interactive** ■ Developer: **Crystal** Dynamics ■ Price: £44.99

■ Release date: 19 February ■ Players: 1 **■** Extras: Analogue controller, Dual Shock-

compatible, memory card

Akuji's not a bad bloke, he's just known as "the heartless" because his evil brother tore his heart out, y'see? Gentlemen, welcome to Crystal Dynamics' charming world of voodoo.

ot a good game engine? Then put it to good use. That must be Crystal Dynamics' motto of the year as the company has managed to shoehorn both Akuii the Heartless and Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver into the much-lauded 3D engine that originally produced Gex: Enter the Gecko. In the process, Crystal has added yet another title to the growing pile of Mario-esque free-roaming 3D adventures for the PlayStation. Don't be fooled, though - you're going to find absolutely nothing cute about this voodoo-inspired puzzler.

The tale begins with Akuji's murder at the hands of his evil brother and concerns his quest through the

underworld to recover his lost ancestors and earn the right to live again. This original tale has given the Crystal free rein to be inventive with its level design, an opportunity that

the company has grasped in terms of look and feel, but fumbled rather as far as gameplay: whatever the

> beautiful-looking icing on the outside, this cake's got 100%

"platform game" as its rather stodgy filling.

Akuji's puzzles are all firmly of the get key/pull lever variety and involve no more brain power than it takes to thoroughly explore your 3D environment. The skill required to play this game is the ability to judge a leap well enough to get from one platform to another, a relatively simple task that is made difficult at times by the free-roaming camera, which can suddenly shift as you're preparing for a jump. You can control the camera of course, but this often leads to tedious pauses in the action while you line yourself up.

Akuji is enjoyable, it's just that it's probably not as satisfying to play as its complex themes demand: the more mature gamer, likely to be attracted by the plot, may well be repelled by the relative Steve Faragher

simplicity of the game itself. ★★★

fluid and seamless a game of this e. And Spyro's 1,000-times cuter.

DON'T BE FOOLED - YOU'RE GOING TO FIND NOTHING CUTE ABOUT THIS **VOODOO-INSPIRED PUZZLER**

Uppers & Downers

Voodoo doll

- It's a twisted world of ritual magic in there
- Akuji's a versatile chap, with loads of manoeuvres ■ He can cast
- great spells, with lots of explosions

Barbie doll

- The puzzles are too simple The annoying camera makes the tough jumps too difficult
- There's too much instant death from falling off the sides of the game

New PlayStation Games



Monkey Hero

■ Publisher: Take 2 ■ Developer:
Blam! ■ Price: £34.99 ■ Release
date: on sale now ■ Players: 1
■ Extras: memory card

Monkey Hero scours 2,500 screens in search of the Nightmare forces...

■ Anyone over the age of 20 remembers the TV show Monkey. Based on traditional Japanese folklore, it was an episodic medley of fight scenes, bizarre imagery and oddball characters. Every week, Sandy, Pigsy and the titular hero ruled BBC2 with gravity-defying kicks. Recent repeats on Bravo indicate the series is best left as a fond memory, but it's proved memorable enough for publisher Take 2 to commission a game adhering to its mystical origins and weird content.

Monkey Hero blends roleplaying elements with fighting and puzzle sequences in a massive quest. Nightmare forces have entered the real world and are attempting to seize control; needless to say only Monkey Hero can save the day. During the game you are attacked by huge snails and creatures made of soup. You also experience odd mushroombased hallucinogenic rebirths. Mysticism aside, fights are also well covered, with bamboo staff spinning and the odd bit of crate throwing adding much-needed action to the guest. So what you have is very disparate content and because of this nothing in Monkey Hero ever really gels.

The main problem lies with the game's linearity. Each puzzle dovetails too neatly into the next, obviously negating the need for you to explore the massive play area. The second problem is its pace. The slow movement of the enemy characters coupled with the overly simplistic fighting sequences, creates a game where the fights are apathetic. And while the 2,500 screens and plentiful end-of-stage guardians should work to create an engrossing epic, the end result is a trek through cute-but-uninspiring levels, where throwing a switch or moving an object are the extent of the puzzles' diversity.

If Monkey Hero is designed for younger players, it is stuck between a rock and a hard place. Monkey the TV series is only recalled by twentysomethings who will find little to enjoy in this routine romp. Today's younger PlayStation users are cutting their teeth on more taxing efforts — dating Monkey Hero even more than the original show that spawned it. * * Steve Merrett*







■ God save us all. They might have Lisa Stansfield's hair, but there's nothing sweet about these little imps. They will absorb precious hours of your life and you will find yourself dreaming about their hats.

THE DIGE IS RIGHT

PUZZLING ADDICTION FROM THE LOWER CIRCLES OF HELL

Uppers & Downers

Double six

- Beautifully presented
- Multi-player modes ■ Makes your head hurt

Snake eyes

■ Not easy to get into
■ Makes your head hurt

Devil Dice

- Publisher: **Sony** Developer: **Shift**
- Price: £39.99 Release date: on sale now
- Players: 1-5 (with multi-tap)

In the annals of puzzle game greatness there is *Tetris*, there is *Bust-A- Move* and there is... a game of dice-rolling imps?

e warned, mortals. *Devil Dice* is evil. Even if you think you're strong enough of spirit to have survived such tortuous personal puzzle-hells as *Bust-A-Move's* helium-addled party, *Kula World's* mindbending Scandinavian conundrums and, of course, *Tetris's* stream of blocks falling for all eternity, this game's mind-mashing dice manipulation is still almost too much to take.

On a gravity-defying board suspended in space, mischievous, hat-wearing imps roll dice around like balancing acts from a particularly surreal circus. By moving your little devil, you can flip the dice through its six sides with the objective being to make the upturned face show the same number as adjoining ones. To make a group of two touching dice sink slowly into the board you need to match the number two; six dice will disappear if you create six touching cubes all showing the number six. Add in chain reactions and a constant deluge of falling dice and it's got to be time for all but

the most spatially aware to crawl behind the sofa, clutching at their frontal lobes.

It's actually easier to grasp the basic idea when you play it, although mastery is likely to be a long way away for all but quantum physicists. An excellent tutorial explains the basics but, after that, *Devil Dice* isn't exactly gentle with you. Instead, you're thrown into a nightmarish dimension of infinite tumbling dice and – in the two-player Battle mode or, worse still, the eek!-five-devils-on-one-screen wars – viciously clever impish opponents.

It's a mark of *Devil Dice*'s quality that, despite your initial bewilderment, the whole dice shimmying concept eventually clicks into place. You begin to instinctively know what numbers are on the hidden faces of the dice and then it's just a case of your brain keeping up with the movements needed to get the right number on the upturned face to make chains of the things disappear.

Blessed by beautiful presentation and the chance for great multi-player battles, *Devil Dice* offers superior puzzling for anyone willing and, indeed, able to get their heads round it. Casual players will be better off with *Bust-A-Move*, but if you're willing to risk long-term addiction and possession by dice-treading demons, this puzzler will have your brain flipping over like its evil dotted cubes. ***



■ Don't look it in the eyes – it'll steal your soul. Too late! Arghh!!

Or you could try...

Kula World

CEE ***

Roll a beach ball around Escher-

Bust-A-Move 2 Acclaim ***** Bubble-popping two-player

FOOTBALL RETURNS TO GRASS RO





■ Sensible's new European Club
Edition makes the world's favourite game frustratingly difficult – tackling is a nightmare and the passing game far too complex. A disappointing finish from the original footy icon, then.

Sensible Soccer European Club Edition

■ Publisher: GT Interactive ■ Developer: Sensible/ Krisalis ■ Price: £39.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1-2

Remember Sensible Soccer? How could you forget? In its day it was the greatest football game in the world and, possibly, the Amiga's finest moment. And now it's returned to the PlayStation, with a host of European clubs in tow. But can it stand up to the current heavyweights?

here are those old faithfuls who still believe Sensible Soccer to be the best football game on the planet. It isn't. ISS, World League Soccer and Actua Soccer have all taken Sensible's original blueprint, thrown in some next-generation dazzle and come out with a better all-round game at the other end. And yet, there is

Uppers & Downers

Net ■ Comprehensive

management set-up

The beauty of aftertouch
Fine database of teams

- Non-existent passing game
- Niggly shooting problems
 Hideous commentary

still something that's particularly special about the original Sensi; something that keeps a little space in the hearts of all those people who played the original.

Which makes this tragically awful PlayStation "update" all the more disappointing. In fact, it's very difficult to see exactly how Sensible Soccer European Club

Edition could have been any worse. The Option screens are pitiful, with League and Cup competitions taking the form of unreadable and indistinguishable "badges". Having to select an option then guit back out when it's not the one you want is staggeringly inept. Fortunately, this selection procedure is an oversight that's just about forgivable once you've traversed the excellent tactical setup, which competes with ISS '98 in terms of choice.

But that's where the similarities end. Where ISS '98 went on to play flawless Brazilian-style football, Sensi opts for a trudgy, Third Division encounter between Torquay and Darlington. Why does the game make it so hard to change direction without losing the ball? How is the players' inability to pass anywhere but straight ahead a realistic rendition of football? Why, when you press the Shoot button, do players sometimes not shoot at all? Why does the standard of the computer sides have to be set so high and their players made so fast, that the tackling option might as well not exist? If you get within a 25-yard radius of an opposition player with an attempt at a tackle, you can deem that a fine endeavour.

Aftertouch – as expected in a Sensi game – does come into play. It's certainly a must when it comes to scoring goals, as you simply won't score without putting a bit of bend on the ball. And, once you get used to the game's blinding shortcomings, this feature does at least liven the proceedings up a little, with some spectacular goals quite possible. But, you shouldn't have to use aftertouch to play passes. Passing should be the simplest part of any football game. Oh, and no review of this game could go without a mention of the commentary, which is utterly appaling. There's no star names and no excitable shouting - just some bloke from down the pub mumbling on about the teams' missed opportunities. Imagine the most boring man you've ever met. Now get stuck in a lift with him.

All of which means Sensi has had its day. Where once we deemed it genius, the European Club Edition is a timely reminder of how things have changed. We may have hoped it wasn't all over. But it is now. ★★

Could try... ISS Pro '98
Konami *****
Could try...

ISS Pro '98
Konami *****
fourte simply the best football game to be found on the planet.



Shanghai: True Valor

- Publisher: Activision
- Developer: Sunsoft
- Price: £34.99 Release date:
- on sale now Players: 1-2 Extras: memory card

The name promises oriental fighting action, but what you're actually getting is a match-the-pairs Chines tile-based puzzler. It's all gone a bit mah jong.

■ Game Boy owners must have Tetris, and they must all love it and play it to death. It's the law. Yet despite the presence of a few excellent puzzle titles for the PlayStation, none are considered an essential purchase. Shanghai: True Valor conforms to this rule. Not because it's a high-quality sleeper like any of the Bust-A-Move series or Super Puzzle Fighter, but for very different reasons indeed.

The basic premise requires you to clear a screen of mah jongstyle tiles by highlighting matching pairs, which then disappear. Some pleasant enough sub-Kung Fu muzak hums in the background as your apparently simple task unfolds. You can highlight only tiles that can slide left or right and the tiles are in piles, so only those that are on the top surface or completely revealed are in play. You can play against the clock or at your leisure, on your own or against an opponent, on a flat board or on the sides of a cube (Rolling Shanghai). And that's it.

No, that really is it because Sunsoft - despite having pinned down the puzzler must-haves of simple rules and variants of play has created some kind of monster. Playing videogames gives you a headache, does it? Well, this one certainly will. Staring at a screen replete with 144 different tiles, many of which bear incredibly similar Chinese characters, will have you rubbing your eyes within minutes and is a feat that should not, under any circumstances, be attempted on a portable TV.

Many goes grind to a deadlocked halt, where you have to start all over again - just like when you play patience. And patience is a commodity that will certainly be in short supply after you've tried to remember the correct order for your 72 pairs of tiles and failed to finish Shanghai yet again. The unfortunate guy who memorised a whole pack of cards on Record Breakers had an easier task. Sunsoft has effectively made snap complex and even **Paul Wilson** more boring. ★

New PlayStation Games



Dodgem Arena

■ Publisher: **Project Two Interactive** ■ Developer: **Formula Game Development** ■ Price: £39.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1-4 **■** Extras: analogue controller, Dual Shock, memory card, link-up cable, multi-tap

Project Two gazes into its future-sports crystal ball and comes up with all-new ice hockey in spaceships.

■ In 1975, the vision of sport in the 21st century was a violent, confrontational game called Rollerball. It starred James Caan and and it was good. Twenty four years on, with less than 12 months remaining of this century, little has changed. Replace macho men on rollerskates with WipEout-style ships and you have Dodgem Arena. Problem is, this particular peek into the future is flawed.

You pit your spaceship against three other opponents - CPU or human-controlled - in satisfyingly futuristic arenas, all swollen with pucks and power-ups. You must collect a puck and fire it towards a moving goal, thus accruing points and winning the game before the timer hits zero. Everyone is trying to do the same, so add weapons of mass destruction into the mix and it soon becomes an enjoyable battle for supremacy, particularly if there are four people playing.

But Dodgem is only fun for a time. It quickly becomes a little samey and - dare it be said boring. Now you might question how "different" many hundreds of games of ISS Pro '98 or Gran Turismo really are, but they are played again and again because they're simulations of sports that people already love. Not Dodgem Arena. It takes something really special to involve people in a sim of a sport that doesn't exist, and Dodgem Arena just can't hold your attention for long enough.

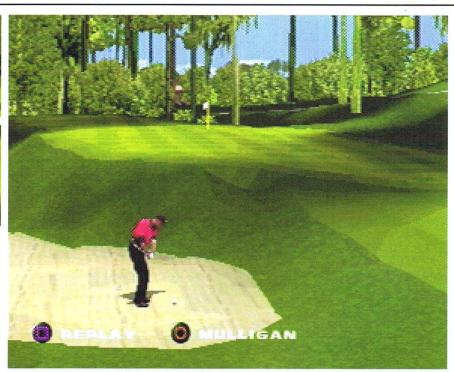
The arenas are much as you'd expect from a futuresport game, with plenty of metal and flashing lights. They do look good but the sad fact is they're all variations on the same theme and there's very little satisfaction to be gained from just continuous progression through the "Story" mode.

Worst of all, the whole look and feel of Dodgem Arena is a continual reminder of WipEout. Strange, you might think, because they're very different games. But if you're going to be so obvious about your influences, then you ought to try and live up to them. Dodgem Arena doesn't even come close. ★★ Ben East





■ EA Sports' is increasingly making its games easier to play - it figures that the reason more adults don't play games is because they're too difficult.



MANNA TIT BE NII

...TO MAKE A GREAT GOLF SIM? TIGER WOODS GIVES IT HIS BEST SHOT

Tiger Woods 99 PGA Tour Golf

Uppers & Downers

- Smooth looks ■ Very simple to pick up ■ Proper players

Tank

- The putting is useless
 Awful soundtrack Too American
- Publisher: EA Sports
- Developer: **EA Sports** Price: **£39.99**
- Release date: 29 January
- Players: 1-4 Extras: memory card

Clubbed to death? Actua Golf 3 might have recently made its way into your golfing hall of fame, but here comes Tiger Woods and he's got EA with him...



Forget crisp-clipped grass. In Tiger Woods you putt on a tile.

hame. It was never really going to be called Mark O'Meara Golf 99, but maybe it should have been. Especially in a year where Tiger Woods has struggled to sweep all before him, while Mr O'Meara has been surging ahead and winning tournaments apparently just for fun.

Instead, of course, we get Tiger Woods 99 PGA Tour Golf, and it's just a bit too annoying. The minute you get going you're treated to a ridiculous sub-Block Rocking Beats soundtrack unless you remember to turn it off before you start - ruining what is otherwise a great round of golf. When you do manage to trash the Chemical-esque accompaniment, the only

sounds you'll hear are the "thwack" of your club hitting the ball and the occasional crow squawking as you drive through the trees. You're only interrupted by Tiger's excitable voice when you've played a "Nice shot!", and his is the only voice you'll hear. Overall this is a very limited repertoire, which is, well... rubbish.

And it's annoying too, because it's niggles like these that ruin a mighty fine effort. We could go on: the wind gusts about like you were stuck in the eye of a hurricane and the putting is ridiculous. After such wonderful approach shots, playing what amounts to curling on grass would be bad even before you get to the truly awful carpet tile-like square that pops up if you get near the hole.

On the plus side Tiger Woods 99 looks far better than Actua 3, and it is simple to pick up. EA Sports is making a concerted effort to make all of its games more accessible to the mainstream, and this is no exception. The five courses are well designed (based on real venues) and, this being an EA title, the range of options available is immense.

In the final analysis, Sony's own Everybody's Golf does the arcade thing far better and far more amusingly. But, like FIFA 99, Tiger Woods 99 will outsell its competition by the millions even though it's a good few strokes away from genius. *** Ben East



Pool Hustler

- Publisher: Sunsoft
- Developer: Ask Co Ltd
 Price: £34.99
 Release date: on sale now
 Players: 1-2

Shirt: Mr Byrite. Slacks: Dad. Shoes: Dolcis plastic loafers. Fingers yellowed by B&H and pockets: awash with change and betting slips. Have you got what it takes to be a pool hustler?

■ Pool is perhaps not premium fare for transfer into the digital medium. Inherent in the game are elements that are hard to emulate when using a joypad. For example, difficult bridging and miscueing, not to mention the fags, booze and unsavoury old men who inhabit pool rooms nationwide.

However, Pool Hustler doesn't do badly. Even when shoehorned into a TV screen, the game offers taxing, competitive play which compensates for its shortcomings by simply being fun.

The physics of the game are the most vital element in a pool sim. Fortunately, here they appear to be on the money. Garish spheres dash about after the (obligatory) heavy handed stroke, infuriatingly rebounding off the jaws of the pockets and clacking together with such vigour one fears for ball splinter. Occasionally, they seem to roll on just a little too far, but this could be because we're only used to seeing them move while we're drunk.

There's more to playing pool than just pool, though, And in a valiant attempt to avoid Pool Hustler from becoming tedious, Sunsoft has imbued Pool Hustler with alterable facilities. There are six play modes, encompassing some splendid trick shot daftness and a tutorial. Five game styles are offered, including the classic eightball and nine-ball. Your success is measured by what best you win you can stick a wager on a game, or indeed on a single shot. A tame attempt at a story prattles away in the background, while your single-player quest - to win greenbacks - wends its way across America. This betting is absent from the two-player tussle - the section where Pool Hustler excels. And after all what's to stop you placing a few real side bets?

Pool Hustler is an austerelooking, clinical rendering of pool. But what it lacks in atmosphere it makes up for in its playable, classical, idealistic vision of pool land. And there's no room for sozzled old men with damp pants in this title. Which is really no bad thing. *** Stephen Pierce



Hugo

- Publisher: ITE Media
- Developer: ITE Media ■ Price: £34.99 ■ Release date:
- on sale now Players: 1

Just when you thought it was safe to frequent the game stores, edutainment hits the PlayStation.

■ Of course, you can see how it happened. PlayStation goes down in price; PlayStation bought by everyone. PlayStation played by infant-schoolers; concerned parents want offspring to play wholesome edutainment titles rather than nasty *Resi Evil*. Thus ITE designs games for parents to buy for the little darlings.

Sadly, though, if *Hugo* is the product of such reasoning, then we should burn our PlayStations now for fear of our children being turned into the cerebral equivalent of paving slabs. You see, *Hugo* isn't hard – it's *thick*.

A visual cross between Mario and a wino, Hugo is a troll who must overcome various challenges to rescue his wife Hugolina from the evil witch Sculla. That means

traversing rivers, flying planes, climbing up hills, skateboarding, scuba-diving and general task-solving. A panoply of activities designed to gently stretch the young mind? In real life maybe, but in *Hugo* the majority of the above can be resolved by pressing Left or Right. True, the more taxing activities require Up, Down or (whisper it) even Jump, but for the most part, that's it.

Again, you can see why ITE did it. Hand-eye co-ordination, a basic fairytale plot, wholesome characters and so on. Sadly, while these are all notions worthy of inclusion in a child-oriented game, ITE seems to have overlooked a few basic things; that you can get all these by the bucketload in superior games such as Spyro: that '90s children are more game literate than ever before and (most importantly) that all of these are already hammered into four-year-olds at nursery school. Advertised as being "designed for children aged 6+", Hugo will come off as simplistic at best, patronising at worst - a real shame given the quality of edutainment titles that could be ported from PC and Mac.

On the briefly positive side, the bold graphics might hold the attention of pire-schoolers and Hugo himself could be mistaken for cute, but more likely your kids will be bored out of their minds by Hugo's repetitive gameplay and irksome characters. Buy them Spyro, buy them books, buy them anything unless you enjoy making children cry. * Mike Goldsmith



Rushdown

- Publisher: InfogramesDeveloper: CANAL
- Multimedia Price: £34.99
 Release date: on sale now
- Players: 1-2

Infogrames cordially invites you to bike, boat and board yourself stupid in sports even more dangerous than a kebab house after the hour of 11.

■ Rad! Cool! Stoked! And other extreme-sport adjectives. With a few exceptions (Cool Boarders 2 and 3 and 1080°) such exaltations have been wholly inappropriate for any of the Pepsi Max-swigging "adrenaline sports" games we've seen so far. In fact, play Rushdown and a good, old-fashioned, English "Arse!" springs to mind.

There are three dangerous pastimes to bloody your 300 quid cagoule on here – snowboarding, kayaking and mountain biking. Thus you have snow, rapids and dirt tracks to negotiate, and either the clock (Arcade mode) or an opponent (in the Championship game) to beat. But the only real

variety is the scenery that rushes past your ridiculous head apparel. Developer CANAL has used the same basic graphics engine for each section; a trick that would be absolutely fine if it wasn't such a clunking old thing, held together with the game coders equivalent of string and chewing gum.

Hurtle your way down any of Rushdown's inclines and you can only grind your teeth at the poorly programmed mess that faces you. As well as experiencing the excruciating animation and general "not right" look of the contestants, there's some serious problems with collision detection. Rushdown lets you ride straight through seemingly solid obstacles, only to make you fall over some way further on, when the game realises what's happened.

There's 15 courses but they're all nondescript downhill runs with a smattering of obstacles. Despite a fair sensation of speed, you'll have to force yourself to keep sliding/paddling/pedalling all the way to the line, in what amounts to a simple left-right racing game with a distinct lack of "radness". And things don't improve in the two-player races; something you can almost always rely on to up the excitement factor a few notches. There's probably a place out there for a well-programmed, adrenal gland-prodding extreme sports game, but Rushdown isn't what the market's waiting for. Ultimately the only extreme thing about it is the level of boredom it will induce. * Robin Alway

PlayStation budget round-up

by Robin Alway

Lucky enough to have 20 quid burning a hole in your January-sale jeans pocket? Remember the wise words of your parents: "A bargain's only a bargain if it's something you need." And then thank your lucky stars you've left home and can spend your cash on what you want. We check out the latest titles to hit Platinum.





Hercules ■ Publisher: Sony ■ Developer: Disney

- Interactive Price: £19.99

 Release date: on sale now Players: 1
- Selling in Carol Voderman-troublingly huge numbers on its original full price release, Hercules is very much the sort of thing we've come to expect from the videogame-producing appendage of Disney. It's a 2D platformer with some lovely looking characters and backdrops, but about as much love and imagination has gone into its production as into the Happy Meal or licensed slippers bearing

the name of the same film.

The only thing that makes Hercules

different to the likes of Aladdin on the SNES or Mega Drive are the introduction of some Crash Bandicoot-style 3D sections where you run into the screen along a narrow path. It's not Mario in terms of freedom of movement, but the 3D bits do at least make a welcome break from the rather more traditional 2D platforming half of the game.

Spread over ten levels, all of which capture the look of the film, you collect coins and urns, using Hercules' sword to bash enemies and the inevitable end of level bosses. Restart points are trickily placed to ensure much feet stamping and red faces among the game's obvious younger target audience.

Of course at £20 this is a purchase designed to please PlayStation's smaller players who're succumbed to Disney brainwashing. The cut scenes are taken straight from the film and the characters all look great, despite lacking the sort of fluid animation that would bring old Walt out of cryo sleep. Unfortunately, though, in terms of platforming pleasure it's all very average. Like a visit to a Disney Shop, it all looks nice enough, but unless you're six or under you don't want to stay there for any length of time. ★★





Soul Blade

- Publisher: Sony Developer: Namco ■ Price: £19.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1-2
- With Tekken 3's assault on the senses still mind-reelingly fresh in the memory, it's easy to forget about Namco's other superb fighting franchise: Soul Blade. Which would be a pity, because in replacing the sound of Tekken's bone-crunching hits with the almighty clang of weapon-based fighting, Soul Blade has easily become one of the finest beat-'em-ups on the PlayStation and a real bargain at 20 quid.

The cast of characters might not be as familiar as that of *Tekken*, but Namco isn't

exactly fielding a reserve team, either. Each of the ten fighters are made more distinctive because of their own choice of weapon, taking in broad swords, spears and – in the case of gimp mask-wearing Voldo – razor-blade gloves. They all carve through the air leaving trails of energy, indicative of Soul Blade's lavish Sword and Sorcery look. If anything, the backgrounds are superior to those in Tekken 3, with fights taking place on moving rafts and lighting effects seemingly produced by God's own angle-poise.

In terms of fighting, the more expert scrappers might be slightly disappointed by a lack of depth in Soul Blade's rucks. Ditching Tekken's one-button-for-each-limb policy, you can string together combos with ease and your Nan could pull off an incredibly impressive-looking special move with three jabs of the same button. You just don't get the same complicated-but-satisfying rewards that Tekhon offers to the well-purcrised player

Tekken offers to the well-practised player. If you prefer to get a martial arts film-like period of long, painstaking training from your beat-'em-ups, Soul Blade can come across as a flashy, sword twirling show-off. It's not Tekken after a trip to ye olde weapons warehouse, but thanks to Namco's classy presentation (the orchestral soundtrack is particularly stirring), great characters and an involving story mode, Soul Blade is a beat-'em-up to savour. That, and the fact that you're swinging razor sharp metal through the air, gives it a spectacular and epic feel all of its own that you need to sample at this knock down price. ******







■ Get yourself a 3D accelerator card if you're a *Heretic* fan. The graphics really come to life in the deeply hued fights scenes.

Uppers & Downers

Magic ■ Slick, fast-

moving and fun

■ Superb weapons and

■ Fantastic

few bugs

A touch

monotonous

graphical effects

Tragic
■ Not exactly ground-breaking
■ Cursed with a

spells

to switch *Heretic II* to a third-person view seems remarkably astute, since it gives this sequel a fighting chance to stand out from a very rowdy crowd.

In terms of structure and setting, though, Heretic II is utterly traditional. It's a defiantly old-"skool" fantasy shooter, very much in the mould of its prequel. There is, of course, lots of blather in the manual about: "the five races of Parthoris", "the Celestial Watcher" and "the Day of Darkness", but it's all a load of toss, really. You run around blasting monsters. Every now and then you have to press a button to open a door. And that's pretty much it.

So all hopes, originality-wise, rest on the new perspective. And, unfortunately, first impressions are somewhat poor. All Raven seems to have done is take the *Quake II* engine and slap a bloke in place of the gun. Indeed one of the very first things you'll do on the training level is to push a barrel around the room without, apparently, touching it. Your "walking" animation remains unnaturally unchanged – with no appearance of strain – as you bellypush the thing in front of you. Even the three-year-old *Tomb Raider* offers better character/object interaction than this.

Bad videogame vibes continue to sour your appreciation of the game, as you observe your third-person alter-ego sliding unconvincingly sideways as though on ice, and then standing on a ledge with both feet clearly over the edge. You'll try launching a few fireballs and find it almost impossible to aim correctly. Should the target be just to the right of the ear, or slightly above the head? After the easy precision of a first-person shooter, this new set-up will initially feel distressingly random. However, if you indulge yourself in the weapon systems, learn a slightly new set of rules and get used to the auto-aim, you'll soon find yourself absorbed in a splendid game with well-designed levels, some neat new features and truly magical special effects.

Despite the fact that he initially handles like a stubborn cow, *Heretic* deserves praise for its athletic central character.

After you've spent a few minutes getting used to the everso-slightly complicated control system, you'll have Corvus (the hero, if you remember, of the original game) leaping and climbing with minimal hassle on your part.

He's certainly a lot more responsive to your control than Ms L Croft – and has a couple of excellent moves all his own, too. Corvus can swing to and fro while hanging from a rope, which is great, but even better is his pole-vault jump, which can also be adapted to produce a brutally effective and spectacular head-kicking attack move.

Heretic II is also supplied with an awesome selection of weapons and spells that it places at its hero's disposal. Apart from a fine variety of staff-based mêlée attacks (of which the head-kick mentioned above is the most satisfying), Corvus has a handy little fireball at his disposal. And, being a thoughtful kind of mystic, he also learns some more impressive spells as he travels around and can equip himself with some lovely magical weapons.

Combat effects are beautifully painted in glowing reds, greens and yellows, and look especially glorious if your computer's blessed with a 3D accelerator card. The Storm Bow, in particular, affords a visual treat of the highest order, as its arrows burst into deep red thunderstorms of strength-sapping rain and murderous lightning bolts.

All these effects are neatly complemented by a series of "defensive" spells that can be activated whenever you have accumulated sufficient "mana" to pay for them. These complementary magics can repel enemies, teleport you to

safety or – most effectively of all – power up your offensive capabilities for a limited time. Used judiciously, they can result is some awesome scenes of colourful carnage.

RAVEN'S DECISION TO SWITCH HERETIC II TO THIRD-PERSON SEEMS REMARKABLY ASTUTE

It's disappointing, though, to find a higher-than-usual bug quotient in a fully finished boxed copy of a game.

Corvus loses the ability to walk forwards every now and then, some of the atmospheric sound effects crop up in the wrong places, airborne creatures are prone to lying "dead" in mid-air and you can, in a few areas, find that your explorations have led you "out of bounds", with no way back. And the "quick save" doesn't work, either.

But these are minor gripes, and will no doubt be fixed by the inevitably soon-to-appear patch (a procedure that seems to have become the norm for all new PC games).

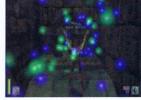
Super to look at, full of action and blessed with some half-intelligent monsters, *Heretic II* has a lot going for it. Its run-and-shoot gameplay doesn't break any new ground; its puzzles may seem under-involving, and its lack of character interaction disappointing in the wake of *Half-Life*, but when all that is said and done, it's a worthy and well-wrought romp nonetheless. ***

Or you could try...

omb Raider III
idos Interactive *****
ilower-paced than Heretic II, but harder,
nore varied and more dramatic. A true epic

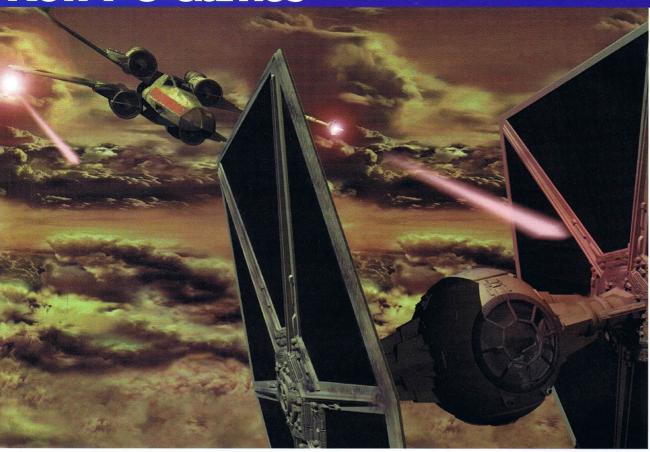
Half Life
Slerra ****
The same basic graphics engine as this one,
but a subtler game – one of the finest eye





■ He might be hard to control, but the third-person Corvus comes supplied with weapons that can piss all over Heretic II's monsters.

New PC Games



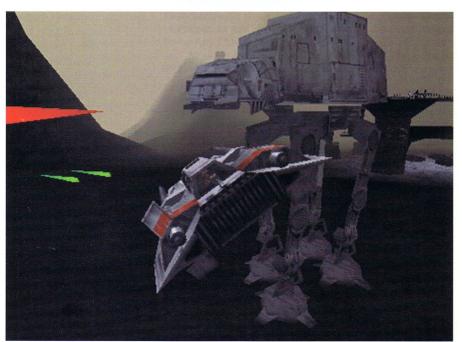






■ Think of Rogue Squadron as the kiddies' end of the SW pool and you'll get the idea.

THEY SHOULD HAVE USED A LITTLE BIT MORE FORCE



Rogue Squadron

■ Publisher: Activision ■ Developer: LucasArts ■ Price: £35 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1 ■ Requires: P166, 32Mb RAM, 60Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, 3D accelerator card, soundcard, Win 95/98 ■ Recommended: joystick

Returning to its arcade roots, the latest *Star Wars* tie-in is a case of aim, fire and repeat to fade. It's the opening level of *Shadows Of The Empire*, used to sustain a whole game. Bad idea.

iven that LucasArts has a well deserved reputation for being one of the most talented and foresighted developers in the PC industry, *Rogue Squadron* is a big, fat disappointment.

With X-wing, TIE Fighter, and the cunningly titled sequel, X-wing vs TIE Fighter, the company revolutionised the space combat genre. It succeeded in creating a believable, multi-faceted and immensely enjoyable trilogy of Star Wars-flavoured action.

Which begs the question: "Why has LucasArts chosen to release Roque Squadron, and take what's essentially a huge

■ Wow, the Battle of Hoth... again. Thermals on. We're going in.

step down from the lofty heights of intricacy that the previous games achieved?" Obviously it's a way of cashing in on the hype currently surrounding the forthcoming film, Episode 1: The Phantom Menace. But as a showcase for the Star Wars universe, it's distinctly average.

In essence Roque Squadron is little more than an extended version of Shadows Of The Empire's opening level, which recreated the Battle of Hoth. The terrain, enemies and choice of craft are widened a little but very little else has changed.

The 16 missions see you flying in either first or third-person over subtly different planetary surfaces - from the deserts of Tatooine and the icy wastes of Hoth, through to the open-air environs of Cloud City. Within each scenario you must achieve multiple mission objectives in order to guarantee success. These generally involve protecting Rebel ships, or destroying key Imperial strongholds, as well as occasionally

disabling craft in order to facilitate rescues. In its way, it's like X-wing but, sadly, it dumbs it down in almost every single area. X-wing's subtleties: wingman commands, shield settings, many alternative secondary weapons and targeting, are left out, in favour of repetitive, no-brainer blasting.

It's blatantly obvious that Rogue Squadron isn't a serious addition to LucasArts' Star Wars catalogue. John Williams' spine-tingling score has been reduced to a shrill MIDI approximation, while the interfaces of previous SW games

that bustled with training grounds, encyclopedias of the universe and ship hangars, are conspicuous only by their absence. The multi-player option has been

omitted, leaving Rogue Squadron as little more than a blaster that deserves to be found in an arcade cabinet asking 50p a throw, rather than sitting on a shelf asking £35.

Indicative of the game's simple structure is the way in which the planets' playing areas are so obviously finite. The X-wing series (being set in space) always gave the impression of limitless flying distances. Not so in Rogue Squadron. Fly in any direction for about a minute, and your ship will be pushed back into the required playing

> and persistent TIEs is therefore a problem as your ship often takes multiple hits thanks to these invisible boundaries. It's also apparent, from the feeble draw distances to the bland ground textures and soundtrack, that this PC version is a direct port of the N64's. That said, it's refreshing to find a PC game that you can master in minutes. And despite all its faults, it's difficult not to enjoy Rogue Squadron while

area. Successfully evading guided missiles

it lasts. The sights of TIE Fighters, AT-ATs and even the diminutive stormtroopers still elicit a thrill.

The downside is that if you're a reasonably competent gamer, you'll have beaten Rogue Squadron inside a week. Do this and you get the chance to play the same missions using different ships, bettering your stats in exchange for gold, silver or bronze medals.

It's little reward though, since the end sequence is one of the poorest you'll have seen in a long time. **

Matthew Pierce

X-wingery made

extremely easy.



Rebellion

IN ITS WAY IT'S LIKE X-WING BUT, SADLY, IT DUMBS IT DOWN IN ALMOST EVERY SINGLE AREA

- The speed and action are
- Terrifyingly realistic AT-ATs
- Han and Chewie make an appearance

- Far too easy
 The new ships are feeble
 Lacks depth
- and complexity







■ Rogue Squadron's major challenge is to try and get an ounce of power or fun out of flying the Y-wings.



New PC Games



Future Cop: LAPD

- Publisher: **Electronic Arts** ■ Developer: Electronic Arts ■ Price: £34.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1-2 Requires: P150, 32Mb RAM, 60Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, graphics card, Win 95 Recommended: P200, 64Mb
- Panda cars and nightsticks are replaced with heavily armoured robots and an array of missiles.

RAM, 180Mb HD space, 3D

accelerator card, soundcard

■ With its quirky camera work and cops-and-robbers scenario, Future Cop: LAPD has to be a contender for the position of first docusoap game. It follows a oneman mission against the pimps, arms dealers and wannabe despots out to take over an unrecognisably futuristic City of Angels. Within this walled metropolis lurk armies of yellowshirted henchmen, huge gun towers, tanks and flying gunships, all designed with a nod to Blade Runner's similarly dark leanings. Controlling the new future of law enforcement - an adaptable walking machine armed with chain guns, missiles and mortars you must uphold the law by eradicating anything in their path.

It's a simple premise for what is a simple, yet beautifully crafted, shooting gallery. The twitchy camera follows your walker as it struts from one linear level to the next, while you pick off the bad guys and their legions of aides. On paper, Future Cop pounds a familiar beat but the implementation of its many features within a simple control system creates an enormously enjoyable game. While you have full control over the walker and its armaments, everything is boiled down to a totally instinctive level. You access each of the three weapons via separate buttons, and targeting is automatically catered for via red laser beams and a lock-on system. All that remains is for you to explore the labyrinthine stages in search of the objectives established by laughably tongue-in-cheek film footage at the start of the level. And there lies the rub.

As is often the case in accessible shoot-'em-ups, Future Cop's simplicity is ultimately its downfall. While picking off the many vehicles is satisfying (the explosions seem to rock the screen), the basic pattern of taking out key installations needs fleshing out - even the wellrealised two-player mode can't Steve Merrett save it. ***

CHOOSE YOUR SUIT, IT'S TIME TO DO BATTLE







A happy little Chinese settlement, replete with archers; an Egyptian military outpost ready for anything; and archers stand at the rear while swordsmen get stuck in. Battle can also be conducted on the high seas You'll notice that the architecture of the settlements is idiosyncratic of the race that it's built by.





God-like

- Detailed graphics
 You could play it forever
- You could play it forever Complex, intriguing and

Dog-like

- The combat lacks pace and action Not enough variety in
- the races

 Can be heavy on the head



The Settlers III

■ Publisher: **Blue Byte** ■ Developer: **Blue** Byte ■ Price: £40 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1 ■ Requires: P100, 32Mb RAM, 200Mb HD space, 2x CD-ROM, 2Mb graphics card, Win 95/NT 4 Recommended: P166, soundcard, 28.8kbps modem for Internet play

Blue Byte returns with its own peculiar and lovable brand of god sim. Yes, the Settlers are back for a third go.

o you wanna play god, hmm? Let's run down the old theological list: unquenchable thirst for power? Check. The desire to see hundreds of scurrying minions do your bidding? Check. The ability to cause natural disasters on a scale traditionally reserved for more tropical climbs? Check, Right, looks like we're all set then; the world is your oyster.

In their third outing, The Settlers have become more worldly wise, more technically minded, and feistier into the bargain. The Settlers (1994) dealt mainly with the acquisition of land; it was a god sim without the fighting and, as such, offered an engrossing and complex experience yet one that always seemed to lack that certain something. The Settlers II (1996) boasted a more user-friendly interface, better graphics and more in the way

A TIME-DIGESTING, INTRICATELY STRUCTURED AND ENJOYABLE GAME

of cultural clashes; there was no combat you could directly control, but your little people would bash away at each other with gusto.

But with its third offering, German developer Blue Byte has succinctly married development concerns and military weight to produce a time-digesting, intricately structured and downright enjoyable strategy game. The Germans typically tone down the violence in their computer games, and here the swordsand-shields element is limited - you'll only need to engage the enemy when things start getting hairy. Consider the fighting a pinch of piquant spice in a delicious bubbling broth of resource management, town construction and displays of divine power.

Since The Settlers II, the control system has been refined for ease of use. That's not to say it's a simple game; far from it. There are so many levels of resource and manpower dependency that, as your cities grow, so will the list of things that can fall into chaos and cause extreme shortages for your people. Coping with growth becomes an art in itself.

So there you have it, a plum of a game. The only criticism is that it can be disorientating for Alex Rickham the novice. ***





■ If your weapon doesn't seem powerful enough, go and find another one – you can use two at once for twice the bloodshed.

GORE-SOAKED FIRST-PERS

Blood II: The Chosen

■ Publisher: GT Interactive ■ Developer: Monolith Productions ■ Price: £39.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1-32 ■ Requires: P166, 32Mb RAM, 200Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, DirectXcompatible graphics card, DirectX-compatible soundcard, Win 95 ■ Recommended: Direct3Dcompatible 3D accelerator card

Great mysteries of our time #23: Why make a sequel to a game that was universally described as a load of old rubbish? Answers on a postcard to...

es, the original Blood was a stinker. For starters, while the rest of the world was gearing up to full-on polygonal 3D in the Quake mould, Blood did its stuff using the creaky old Build engine, previously seen powering Duke Nukem 3D more than a year beforehand. And then there was the question of difficulty; it went from preposterously hard to nigh-on impossible. Basically, no-one bothered to play Blood for more than a few levels because they were getting killed far too often and the game looked terrible.

It had guite a good living-dead-style story, though, and you'd have to guess that it's that aspect alone that's resurrected Blood for a second go. And what do you know? This is one sequel that's far superior to its predecessor. What are the chances of that happening?

Fair warning, though; Blood II: The Chosen is still monumentally tough. It's not as unfairly difficult as Blood - you stand a chance of making it through the first few levels without getting killed in an unwarranted way - but you can forget about an easy ride. You'll probably forgive it however, because its looks are infinitely superior.

Uppers & Downers

Haemoglobin

- Engaging plotEntertaining armamentsSound game engine

Haemorrhoid Not as good as the

- competition

 No immediate difference in
- the characters

Everything's powered by Monolith's LithTech engine, which moves quickly and comes close to the sort of things that Unreal and Quake II can do. A variety of imaginative locations await and they're filled with the inevitable bad guys gunning for your head, so you'll need some weapons.

And that's where Blood II provides the most thrills. Forget pistols and sub-machine guns, you'll have much more fun dishing out hot, fiery death through the misuse of a flare gun, or reducing your foes to atomic size with a handy singularity generator. Unfortunately, there's no sign of Blood's pitchfork or comedy aerosol/lighter combo.

There are four characters to choose from, and these have supposedly differing abilities, but this is something you'll only notice after hours of play. Thrown into the mix are loads of guns, a strong story split into plenty of chapters (levels) and a non-stop array of ways to kill or be killed. It's a heady mixture, and yet it falls short of the standard set by the likes of Half-Life and Unreal. It is fast though, so if you miss the speed of *Doom* you might well find Blood II worth a look. ★★★ Travis

could try.





■ Good action, top weapons, okay story, but dull levels.



Asghan

■ Publisher: **Grolier** Interactive Developer: Grolier Interactive Price: £39.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1 ■ Requires: P120, 16Mb RAM, 20Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, SVGA, Win 95

Recommended: P200, 32Mb RAM, 8x CD-ROM drive, Soundblaster soundcard, 3Dfx-compatible 3D accelerator card

Throw elements of roleplaying and first-person shooting into a pot, then pour the resulting mixture into a Tomb Raider mould to get the sword-'n'-sorcery tale of Asghan.

■ Isn't it funny how games that improve on an older title rarely acknowledge their predecessor's existence? Take Tomb Raider. You don't often hear how much debt it owes to the ground-breaking Fade to Black but loads of Al (After Lara) games that are... well, a bit ropy, are classed as Tomb Raider clones or rip-offs. The latest release to be influenced by Tomb Raider is Asghan.

Ashgan's beardy plot involves the titular hero returning from a dragon-slaying mission to find his uncle Morghan causing all sorts of evil magical malarkey. The plot is rudimentary sub-Tolkein fare, woven around a third-person search and slash-'em-up. Steer Asghan around a series of pretty locations, whacking all manner of mystical characters with your sword, casting the odd spell and solving puzzles to reach a final confrontation with Morghan. As well as using your hefty blade and the odd incantation, you can drop into the first-person "crossbow mode" for dispatching enemies with a carefully aimed arrow.

With beautifully detailed characters and scenery to back up the puzzles, along with a range of views and a complex selection of combat moves, Asghan should succeed where post-TR titles such as Deathtrap Dungeon failed. Unfortunately, though, it has a few shortcominas. First, the awkward controls make sword combat more a case of random button-bashing than a dramatic Zorro-style fencing match, while long-range combat is hampered by dreadful aiming functions and limited ammunition. The puzzles are either too obscure or obvious to allow the plot to unfold naturally. Only fluid, athletic animation and dynamic movement through the levels could save it now... Bugger. ★ Maff Evans



Grand Touring

■ Publisher: **Empire** ■ Developer: Elite ■ Price: £34.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1-7 ■ Requires: P166, 32Mb RAM, 40Mb HD space, CD-ROM drive ■ Recommended: modem for Internet play

Race saloon and touring cars around some gorgeous-looking street and country tracks. Reminds us of something we've seen before. Maybe it's the name...

■ On your first play of *Grand* Touring, you'll be struck by the detail of the landscape. It looks lovely – clear and crisp, stretching all the way to the horizon. You may even avert your eyes from the road in order to marvel at the scenery. Is that a tower block in the distance? Why yes. Is it subtly illuminated when you round the same bend in the night-time mode? Indeed. Is that a family of swallows gliding perilously in front of your windscreen? The anatomical details are faultless.

All things considered, it's a shame that Grand Touring is otherwise such a dull experience. There's a certain PlayStation game which it's evidently trying to emulate and, while the basics are the same - Arcade or Simulation modes, advanced opponent AI, championship tournaments, the ability to tinker with your car's insides - Grand Touring is little more than a pale PC imitation of its close namesake.

For a start, the range of flash automobiles is too stingy for this game to become essential to motoring geeks. There are 20 cars available, but they're not even official models, so you lose a level of realism straight away - even with the addition of 20 tracks from across the world. Altering engine parts can make a slight difference to your car's speed and movement, but it's difficult to detect any improvement to the handling as Grand Touring's steering is such a trying process.

If a game is attempting to recreate a top speed racing experience, the controls must react to split-second decisions, otherwise your car will be skidding into the sand on every corner. Grand Touring is noticeably sluggish in this department, reacting slowly and then lurching too far in the required direction. As if to balance this fault, the whole game is simply too slow the speed counter is generally contradicted by what you actually see. To complete the picture, your

TAKE TO THE COLD WAR SKIES **Apache Havoc**

■ Publisher: **Empire** ■ Developer: **Razorworks** ■ Price: £39.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1-8 ■ Requires: P200, 16Mb RAM, Win 95 ■ Recommended: 3D accelerator card

Relive that bit from Apocalypse Now in the comfort of your living room with the PC's finest helicopter sim. It's big, it's complex, and it's scary.

n this post-Cold War politically correct world it's important not to take sides, or perhaps instead to see both sides of the conflict. So, while you might already be familiar with the US attack helicopter the Apache Longbow, did you know that there's also a Russian equivalent called the Havoc?

Play Apache Havoc and you get the opportunity to fly either of the two helicopters across three campaigns, working on one-or-other side of the conflict. You might

be a US ally or a force who has invested in Russian equipment and roped the Reds into helping.

The campaigns themselves, like those in DiD's Total Air War, are dynamic: there's no set list of missions - there's no carefully constructed story line and no difficulty weighting. Instead you find yourself plonked in a unit at

Uppers & Downers

- Choppers
 Extremely complex and very believable
- Spot-on simulation Fantastic graphics

Penny-farthings

- Starts very slowly
 You have to behave
- yourself
 Easy to get shot down

the start of a war – a war that continues around you, independently of your actions. You can choose which missions you want to fly, with the more complex and tricky sorties affecting small elements of the overall war.

Each Apache Havoc campaign has a time limit, within which you must prove yourself. Fly a successful mission and the time's increased. Crash, die, shoot down the good guys, or just be crap and the timer heads zero-wards.

It's a fantastic looking game, although you really need a 3Dfx card if you're going to see the battle zones in all their glory. You get real-time lighting, variable weather, colourful skies that show the time of day and massive explosions; in short, loads of eye candy to distract you from the task in hand. But it's also incredibly difficult. Both helicopters are modelled with anal accuracy, and if you've never flown one before (either virtually or otherwise), you might be surprised how hard they are to move and keep in the air simultaneously. Combine this predicament with staying low and firing your weapons and you're in for a real challenge. ★★★ Steve Owen









■ While you might be flying one of two helicopters, there're loads of extra vehicles and warships in the area. The large cities make excellent hiding places for rebels with causes.

engine emits a decidedly reluctant hum, as if you were trying to drive the vehicle through treacle.

With all this said, the Championship option becomes a distinctly uninviting prospect. Each race consists of ten turgid laps, and you're in serious danger of falling asleep at the wheel. At least you'll have some nice scenery to look at when you Sam Richards wake up. ★★







Player Manager **Season 98-99**

■ Publisher: ANCO Software ■ Developer: ANCO Software Price: £29.99 Release date:

on sale now ■ Plavers: 1 ■ Requires: P120, 32Mb RAM,

35Mb HD space, Win 95 Recommended: P166

Take control of any league team and, through astute management, guide your club to European glory.

■ This isn't a new genre, but Player Manager Season 98-99 breaks with recent tradition by largely ignoring the financial side of the game. Here your input is confined to keeping the wage bill under control and ordering an occasional bit of building work to increase stadium capacity. This leaves you plenty of time to concentrate on what Mr Gullit would no doubt call the sexier side of management; namely transfers, training and tactics.

And concentrate you must. because each player in the game not only has 20-or-so different ratings in the usual categories (stamina, passing and so on), but also a "unique personality". created with the addition of 22 invisible stats. Well the fog of war is a common enough concept, but the fog of football anyone?

Of course we would be guite happy to try and get inside our players' heads. We could then figure out if they missed that tackle because they're lonely or nervous, or whether they're just rubbish. But, sadly, the end result just isn't worth the effort. Worse still, come match day neither the 2D or 3D representations offer many reasons to keep you playing for long.

Whichever formation and tactics you employ, virtually every goal occurs the same way, as the goalkeeper parries a shot straight to an incoming forward. You can play an entire season without seeing a header hit the target, even if your tactics call for two wingers to get crosses in. Conversely, when you find a winning formation, your team tends to keep winning no matter how much you mess about with the selection procedures.

A final nail in the game's coffin comes from the training and tactics sections. These are generally excellent, but because they don't bear enough relevance to what goes on during the actual match they are wasted.

This is a major disappointment Glen Weston all round. *





Jane's Combat **Simulations: WWII Fighters**

■ Publisher: Electronic Arts ■ Developer: **Electronic Arts** ■ Price: £34.99 ■ Release date: on sale now Players: 1network game Requires: PII 200MHz, 32Mb RAM, Glide or Direct 3D graphics accelerator card, Win 95 Recommended: PII 300MHz, 64Mb RAM ■ Extras: supports joysticks, modem for Internet play, network

This WWII flight sim is based around the Ardenne offensive of December 1944 to January 1945.

■ Walk out on to the runway of this Jane's Combat sim and you can choose to fly planes from either side of the battle, including the ubiquitous Mustang or FW-190. Once you actually get your wheels off the tarmac, you can try out the free flight option - this gives you the chance to get the hang of your plane without being shot at. Moving on from this there are quick dogfights, standalone missions and the obligatory long campaigns that enable you to play as a pilot from either of the two sides throughout the offensive.

The planes are beautifully rendered with superb texture maps, and the ground looks realistic, showing the snowy Ardennes forests and muddy patchwork of fields, all shrouded in winter mists and low clouds.

Unfortunately, what counts isn't how the ground looks, it's how hard you hit it: at the harder difficulty levels, you can be as much of a menace to yourself as the enemy. Put your plane into a steep dive then try to pull out suddenly and there's a good chance that the strain will pull your wings off. Battle damage is also realistically simulated and there's a wealth of detail in the cockpit, too.

If you don't like the look of the provided WWII missions, you can use the Mission Builder to knock together your own, and if even that pales after a while, you can link up with other players over a LAN or Internet connection.

Jim Chandler ***









■ These pictures can't hope to convey the sheer torture of sixhours of solid exposure to Jeff Wayne's experimental noises.

THE GAME OF THE MUSICAL OF THE BOOK

Jeff Wayne's 'War Of The Worlds'

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive** ■ Developer: **Rage** Software ■ Price: £34.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1 ■ Requires: P166, 16Mb RAM, 120Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, 1Mb graphics card, 16-bit soundcard ■ Recommended: P266, 32Mb RAM, 2Mb graphics card

When Jeff's '70s synth opus, Victorian novelist HG Wells and videogames got into bed together the result could only be a one-night stand and a hangover.

rogrammer Rage has managed to produce a game that looks as dated as Jeff "Woo Woo" Wayne's radiophonic workshop classic sounds. Only HG Wells has escaped with his good name intact, and this is largely because his novel has been buried - almost invisible underneath an Earth vs Mars real-time strategy-fest that melds Risk and Command & Conquer with worryingly limited success.

The Risk element comes in the shape of a

strategic map of the UK. From here you can shunt your units around, decide which sector you'd like to conquer next and choose where to build more facilities and defences.

Freakishly, there are no missions. You battle for this map (as either the cold-calling Martians or puny Victorian Earthlings) and that's it. As a game it does work, though. Your strategies can be knocked-up from a quick scan of the map, and the atmosphere builds as you watch great swathes of territory turning red as the country falls to the Martian advance.

Unfortunately, as soon as you stray from the first map WOTW goes horribly wrong. To build or fight you must click on a sector of the main strategic map to move into the battle map. This section conforms to the familiar laws of C&C-type real-time strategy. But the graphics are tragic, betraying a total failure of imagination and dramatic flourish.

The battles themselves deliver little of the nuance or excitement of Red Alert or Total Annihilation, and your quest for UK domination is knobbled by poor path-finding and a simplistic interface. And these factors slow the game, forcing you to spend more time fiddling with mundane tasks and waiting for screen updates than actually doing battle. ★★ **Mark Donald**

Uppers & Downers

Tripod

Atmospheric

AtmosphericNovel fusion of strategy

and action

Jeff's electro-grooves...

Gastropod
■ ...soon wear thin

■ It's a graphical disaster ■ And moves at a snail's pace



X Games Pro **Boarder**

- Publisher: **EA Sports** ■ Developer: Radical Games
- Price: £39.99 Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1-8 Requires: P166, 32Mb RAM, 75Mb HD space, 8x CD-ROM drive Recommended P200 155Mb HD space, 3D accelerator card ■ Extras: supports Force Feedback. modem for internet play, network and serial link-up

EA Sports grabs a snowboard and gets trestled to the moose juice, man.

■ While the bright young things who own PlayStations are also the kind of people to appreciate a snowboarding sim, this PC port of the EA game is less assured of a warm reception. Luckily, X Games Pro Boarder has a few tricks up its fleecy sleeves to ease the more conservative gamer into the too cool world of snowboarding.

Initially, there are five events to ride in, with eight world-class riders flexing their boards on the stunt-based courses, such as the half-pipe; showing off their straight racing on the Midnight Express; or combining the two on rides like Mt Baker Gap. It's with the stunts, though, that you get a chance to really shine. From basic flips and spins, all the way through to signature moves, such as the Superman Front Flip and Indv McTwist, practice makes it possible to rack up some high scores and pull off spectacular moves. The 3D engine powering X Games isn't anything different but, thanks to the way boarders frequently appear in danger of leaving Earth's orbit, the game easily weighs in as one of the most hypnotic sports sims around.

When you win in all five categories, a further five become available. Then you get a final set, including the ultimate arena: the Freeride. Here, a whole mountainscape is modelled, and you can head off in any direction while "bonking" into fallen trees and spinning off ledges.

And, all the while, punchy, crunchy guitar tracks pound along in the background, from a roster of artists that include the mighty Foo Fighters. In fact, the music will appeal long after the fun of pulling all those stunts has palled. Focusing on cool moves rather than competitive races is fine, but it leaves both single and multiplayer modes feeling limited. As computer games go, X Game Pro Boarder is one hell of a music video. ★★★ Mark Ramshaw

YOU ADAM AND EVE IT? A GARDEN OF EDE





■ This being a post-nuclear America, there's plenty of toxic waste and mutant creatures to contend with.

Uppers & Downers

Nuclear

- Epic, yet detailed Seriously RPG-ish, yet humorous
- The turn-based combat

Unclear

Requires real patience...
...and an ability to ignore the presentation

Fallout 2

- Publisher: Interplay Developer: Black Isle Studios
- Price: £39.99 Release date: on sale now Players: 1
- Requires: P133, 16Mb RAM, 86Mb HD space, 4x

CD-ROM drive ■ Recommended: P166

A post-nuclear journey to discover some fabled gardening kit doesn't sound too promising, and that's before you consider the hard-edged roleplaying elements included in this sequel. So why the hell is it so enjoyable?

allout 2 is the sort of game your parents warned you about. Unless, that is, one of them looked suspiciously like that little bald fella from the Dungeons & Dragons cartoon, and had a mysterious habit of giving you sets of many-sided dice every Christmas. In which case, Fallout 2 will be right down your hit point-laden, armour class-protected street. Brace yourself; against all the odds (not to mention commercial considerations), this is a role-playing game done the old-fashioned way.

It's not just because the forced isometric perspective and scrappy bitmap graphics are enough to have you remembering why nobody writes games for the Commodore Amiga any more. And it's not even that the character statistic screen contains more numbers than a year of National Lottery results. In fact, the use of traditional methods is evident in just about every aspect of Fallout 2. The gameplay revolves around your search for the "Garden of Eden Creation Kit" in a postapocalyptic landscape, 50 years on from the original

Fallout. Playing as either a good or bad guy, you get to experience a combination of exploration, scripted conversation and battle sequences, which have a boltedtogether air about them that you just don't see these days. Fallout even has the audacity to switch from realtime to turn-based movement whenever there's an enemy creature nearby..

But if you've tasted the fruits of the original Fallout, you'll be familiar with such weirdness, of course. And there are a lot of people out there who gave it a try, for, despite such drawbacks, it inspired real devotion among gamers. And bizarrely, even if you abhor the idea of the original game - where there's no real 3D and no joystick option - chances are you'll fall for its sequel.

It seems that the plethora of role-playing games out there - both board and computer-based - may actually be on to something. That ever-so-simple formula, which involves handing the player some character statistics, then leading them through a story, with plenty of opportunity for combat and accruement of groovy objects, really does possess a kind of magic after all. Watching those statistics slowly rise as your on-screen alter ego whacks out another bunch of nuclear-flavoured mutants, it's impossible not to feel that warm glow. And because the plot – which has our hero journeying to Las Vegas, San Francisco and other western seaboard haunts - takes its time to unfold, Fallout 2 manages to conjure up a neatly epic feel that so many modern games lack.

Play Fallout 2 and you'll understand. Just don't let anybody you see you doing it. The ridicule could be too much to take. ★★★ **Mark Ramshaw**

could try...





Scotland Yard

■ Publisher: **Cryo** ■ Developer: Cryo ■ Price: £29.99

■ Release date: on sale now

■ Players: 1-6 ■ Requires: P166, 32Mb RAM, 220Mb HD space (Win 95), 115Mb HD space (Win 98), 8x CD-ROM drive, graphics card

■ Recommended: 28.8kbps modem for Internet play

Child labour, opium, violins and TB - Victorian London had it all. Take a trip back in time with Cryo's 19th century detective game.

■ Supposedly, Scotland Yard is a computer version of the

"classic" board game, but don't worry - we hadn't heard of it either. In this PC outing, criminal genius Mr X is loose in London, and it's the job of the local constabulary to use the available transport to track him down before he blows town.

You begin Scotland Yard with a limited number of tickets to travel between the game's 199 locations, and you can travel via taxi, bus and tube. Taxi rides are plentiful, but they'll only take the con or criminal to a nearby street, whereas bus and tube rides aren't as plentiful, but go further.

If a member of the police turns up at the same location as Mr X he gets nicked but, to make things easier for the old

blighter, he only rarely becomes visible to the Fuzz.

In the multi-player mode Scotland Yard is a straight port of the original board game, and all but one of the players takes the role of a dick, in an effort to catch their outnumbered opponent.

The single-player game features a similar mode where you can play as the cops or Mr X. but with additional enhancements such as 3D representations of the locations and a selection of criminals and coppers to play as not that these add much to the gameplay. The baddies on offer in this section are an odd bunch. ranging from Dracula to HG Wells (apparently he's an evil time traveller. Cuh, you think you know

someone...) and, as you'd expect, each miscreant has their own agenda. Count Zeppelin is (literally) a high-flying spy, whereas Frankenstein's Creature just wants to escape his pursuers.

Scotland Yard's heart is in the right place, and it's clear that the design team has tried to make the most of the available brief. but it doesn't comes across especially well as a PC game. The original version is tedious bevond belief (plus, ridiculously, you can't play in single-player mode unless you have access to the Internet or a network cheers), and the enhanced version. adds little but the extra visuals to the proceedings.

Simon Garner

**

PC budget re-releases by Robin Alway and Sam Richards

Hark! Is that the sound of cheap winter PC software calling to us from the snow-laden treetops? No, don't be silly - that's a cheeky robin redbreast. The cheap software is over here under this snowdrift, shivering, and waiting for you to welcome it into your home and give it a hot drink.



Broken Sword

■ Publisher: Sold Out ■ Price: £4.99 ■ Release date: on

sale now Players: 1 ■ One of the best 2D point-andclick adventure games on the PC Broken Sword blends a modern thriller plot with a mystical story about Templar secrets. You play American tourist and busybody George Stobbard, a visitor to the fair city of Paris. In familiar pointand-click fashion, you must unravel the mystery in which he happens to get himself entangled: he witnesses a clown assassinate an old man, and steal his manuscript Love interest shimmies on to the scene in the shape of Nico, the female French reporter, Logical cinematic, complex, and funny by turns. Broken Sword is a compliment to any thinking gamer's



Cannon Fodder

Publisher: Sold Out Price: £4.99 ■ Release date: on

sale now ■ Players: 1
■ Sensible Software did a brave but brilliant thing with Cannon Fodder. The company took a real-time strategy wargame, reduced the scale – so you only control a tiny number of soldiers at a time - and gave it an amusing, cartoon overtone. The resulting title is more reminiscent of the 8-bit arcade favourite Commando than the likes of Command & Conquer, and although (or perhaps because) it's in terribly poor taste, it contrives to be immense fun. Using your mouse to point-and-click your minuscule men around a battlefield strewn with bunkers and crates of grenades is strangely difficult, but endlessly compelling. Looks a little dated now



Jedi Knight

■ Publisher: Activision Classic Line ■ Price: £9.99

Release date: on sale now

layers: **1-16**

■ The sequel to Dark Forces is more than just Quake in the Star Wars universe - there are plenty of skins and patches that enable you to blast stormtroopers in id's classic already. Instead, Jedi Knight is a whole 3D Skywalker experience, and a must-play for any serious Empire-feuding fan The genius lies in the impeccable level design, and the Force powers which you activate through keyboard shortcuts. Use your powers when in danger or to complete puzzles and everybody's happy, but employ them to kill innocent civilians (of which there are many) and you'll be seduced by the Dark Side. Truly engrossing. ****



Power Racing Pack

■ Publisher: Sierra

■ Price: £19.99

Release date: on sale now (in Electronics Boutique),

■ General release March

■ Players: 1-8

The drawback with both NASCAR and Indy Car as sports is that the tracks are boring. Narrow tight ovals test a driver's endurance. minimise the risk of horrendous crashes and provide a great view for spectators. Sadly they don't deliver as much of a thrill for the drivers as the meandering roads of a Grand Prix circuit. Included in this pack, both NASCAR Racing 2 and IndyCar Racing 2 are super realistic with NASCAR the more attractive and accessible of the two. This pack is a must for racing enthusiasts but. you're only a casual player, you could find this a chore. **



Redline Racer

■ Publisher: **Ubisoft Classique**

Price: £12.99

Release date: on sale now Players: 1-8

Magnificently, you can race up to 19 opponents in *Redline Racer* and, even if you don't have a 3D card, it all moves at quite a lick. There are ten tightly-designed tracks, ranging from desert outback and beaches to snowy mountain passes, and eight superbikes to choose from. If you do own an accelerator card you can take advantage of all the extra eve-candy, such as particle smoke and sparks, sun glare and animated weather. And the racing isn't just pure arcade velocity – you need precision control if you're to stay on Pray that you do, though, because the crash effects are disappointing. A cheat mode enables you to take



Shadows of the **Empire**

■ Publisher: Activision Classic

Line ■ Price: £9.99 Release date: on sale now

Players: 1

■ "Star Wars Lite" as it's ofter affectionately known, is one for the bairns. Packed with Star Wars atmosphere and looking slick (providing you have a 3D card), it's designed for ease of play rather than depth. The linear, no-nonsense levels provide a plethora of gameplay styles: there are space combat sections, first-person shooting sections and even a ride on a speeder bike. But almost all of them are either dull or far too easy Some set-piece moments add entertainment but, apart from the exhilarating opening Hoth battle level, Shadows doesn't really keep vour iovstick waggling, ★★



Stars

collection. * * *

■ Publisher: GT Replay Price: £5.50 Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1

■ Stars is bizarre – it's got an odd history – but is also peculiarly popular. Engrossing but long-winded, it began life as a shareware title which rapidly gained fame among the newsgroups. As a result it's become an underground classic although its ascetic interface, brutal screen displays and complex, turnbased order system don't really lend themselves to mainstream popularity. The setup is a travel-andtrading strategy simulation in which you're encouraged to build your own starships colonise new worlds and research powerful weapons Arcade's advice: check out the trial version from http:// beast.webmap.com/stars!/demo.ht m before you spend your cash. ★★



Toon Struck

though. ***

■ Publisher: **Sold Out**■ Price: **£4.99** ■ Release date: January ■ Players: 1

■ Most critics loved it, the punters (sadly) didn't buy it - Toon Struck represents a courageous attempt to muscle in on LucasArts' territory, and as a game it never quite gained the public acclaim it deserved. Think of Toon Struck as an interactive Who Framed Roger Rabbit, but without the dumb bunny. Live action FMV of Christopher Lloyd meanders its way through a 2D comedy world, where exploding turkeys form the instruments of Count Nefarious's villainy. The childlike animation is shot through with a ruthless streak of adult humour which borders on the risqué. This is its second outing on budget, so if you abstained the first time round, you've got another chance. ★★★



Virtual Karts

■ Publisher: Sold Out Price: £4.99 Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1

■ By far the most ridiculous idea in the world, is the control set-up for Virtual Karts. Ostensibly a go-kart sim, this is in fact a monotonous. low-res driving game where you are expected to steer either with one of the few supported steering wheels or with the mouse. Using your keyboard or a joystick are not options. Until you've tried it, you have no idea how hard it is to turn corners at speed using the mouse the slightest twitch will send your vehicle into the kind of spin Taz is famed for The race and kart editors mean you can set up your own machine and then race it on different road surfaces in varying weather conditions, but we can't see why you'd want to. *



Warcraft

■ Publisher: Sold Out Price: £4.99 Release date: on sale now Players: 1-2

■ Top-down, real-time, role-playing, resource-management: Warcraft is a game of hyphenated adjectives. This is the title that spawned two seguels: the excellent Warcraft 2 and then, more recently, Starcraft Set in a fantastic past replete with knights, serfs and wizards, the strategy guru Blizzard unleashed a battle game on the public which manages to be both comical and ntensely tactical at the same time It's easy to get to grips with but, given that it has as much depth as a Pacific trench, it keeps on challenging you. Sure, it's beer superseded, but at this price you can afford to sate your curiosity and experience some strategy



novelty rides too. ***

WipEout 2097

■ Publisher: Psygnosis
Argentum ■ Price: £14.99 Release date: on sale now

Players: 1

A console classic that went on to dominate the "future racing" genre on almost all platforms. In WipEout you control a turbo-charged hover vehicle. The races are set on hightech neon-lit tracks and you have homing missiles to assist your victory efforts. Power-up squares on the circuit give you extra bursts of speed or shields. The race routes are spectacularly designed with huge leaps, winding corridors and knuckle-whitening turns. The original WipFout had frighteningly testing levels, but 2097 also boasts an arcade mode for you to practice in. The only problem is that it's been left on the hard shoulder by games such as DethKarz. ★★★



Worms

■ Publisher: **Sold Out** ■ Price: £4.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1-8

■ Despite what many of its console-addicted detractors may say, the PC can rival the PlayStation for those post closing-time "come round my house lads, we can play videogames" moments, and Worms is a straightforward lesson in just how. It's turn-based, simple and enormously funny – simply lead your team of invertebrates to victory against those of your mates. You get a variety of weapons and all you have to do is line up your launch angle, hold down for power and lob an assault. The visuals are chunky and functional without being cutting edge, and since the sequels Worms spawned are almost identical, for a fiver this original is a must-have. **

New Nintendo 64 Games





TERRORISE THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Uppers & Downers

- Skittish
 Huge tracks
 Uses lots of
- imagination Simple and
- unadulterated fun
- Hilarious stunt

Skiddy

- No race catch-
- up option Slightly jerky

San Francisco Rush 2

- Publisher: GT Interactive Developer: Midway ■ Price: TBC ■ Release date: TBC ■ Players: 1-2
- Solid cartoon racing with the emphasis on entertainment.

o one else in the Arcade office seemed to warm much to San Francisco Rush 2. Mark - glued to Ridge Racer 4 - scoffed at its cartoony graphics. Robin - awheeling and a-dealing on the phone – scorned at the unrealistic handling of the cars. Sam - used to the delights of TOCA 2 - said it reminded him of the ancient coin-op Outrun. Neil said it made him homesick.

Perhaps it's the nature of today's driving games that have addled these great gaming minds. While fun and instantly playable driving games abounded a couple of years ago, these days racing games lean in two very distinct directions. The first category includes the ultra-realistic and graphically heavy strict simulations; games like Gran Turismo and Formula One World Grand Prix. The second is made up of the more accurate coin-op conversions – arcade-style games like Ridge Racer and Daytona.

San Francisco Rush 2 falls into the second category, and is a driving game of the instantly playable variety. What make it so good are the tracks, set in places like New York, Seattle and Hawaii, with a fantastic race in Alkatraz. The criss-cross nature of the American roadway system makes for some

superb opportunities to skid round right-angled corners, over grass and gratings, through tunnels and over flyovers.

The routes are not set, with each track featuring plenty of alternative tracks, interesting little short-cuts and great opportunities to get lost. You can drive down some steps into the New York subway, for example, and scoot along the tracks until you crash into a train, or take a tunnel through the depths of the prison island. There aren't many driving games that are as fun on practice mode as they are in races proper, but there's so much to explore in Rush 2

SET IN PLACES LIKE NEW YORK, SEATTLE, HAWAII AND ALCATRAZ

that you'll often find yourself reversing around corners and double-backing on yourself to see if you've missed anything, forgetting completely about your lap times. The choice of cars is great too. You get 15 vehicles, and you can customise each of them - right down to adjusting their brakes and durability. Choose your vehicle from sports cars, 4 x 4s and our particular favourite – the VW Camper Van.

San Francisco Rush 2 is clean, wholesome fun. It does have some problems - there's no catch up, which'll most likely prevent you from ever reaching pole position, but settle down with a second player for some split-screen action, and the hours will fly by. $\star\star\star\star$ Rich Pelley

Look out for loads of cars

and arcade-style spills.



Crusin' USA
Nintendo *
Similar ilk, but with cardboard scenery and
music to make your ears bleed.



Get used to the open road. The computer-controlled opposition race so far ahead you'll soon be all alone.

N64'S FIRST HI-RES RACER REVS UP

Top Gear Overdrive

- Publisher: THE Developer: Snowblind
- Price: £44.99 Release date: on sale now
- Players: 1-4 Extras: steering wheel, Expansion Pak

Developer Snowblind takes *Top Gear Rally from* previous owner Boss, piles on the eye candy and create a curious hybrid...

urok 2 has been beaten. Though not in the fields of ludicrously entertaining weaponry, or huge scaly beasts or even in firing a missile that burrows into people's brains. No, it's been beaten to the first use of Nintendo's new Expansion Pak. Trumpeted as the first game ever to employ the memory-expanding box o' joy - and thus turning the N64 into a machine capable of producing graphics similar to those you'd expect from a high-spec 3Dfx-equipped PC - Turok 2's constantly slipping release date enabled Top Gear Overdrive to skid into the shops a full two weeks before Acclaim's effort. It came seemingly out of nowhere and looks absolutely gorgeous.

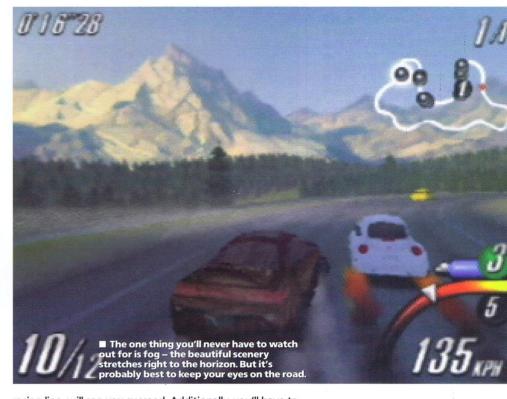
And why? We don't know. There's no mention in the instruction booklet of a high-resolution option, but, by golly, slip in the Expansion Pak, go to Options and - hey presto! Overdrive paints the eyeballs with gloriously metallic cars, majestically sweeping backdrops and absolutely no fogging or pop-up. It's quite a sight to see.

It's a shame, then, that Top Gear Overdrive's tyresquealing gameplay doesn't quite live up to the standards set by the superb presentation. Ostensibly a semi-sequel to Boss Studio's Top Gear Rally, Overdrive slips quite neatly into the space between stools marked "simulation" and "arcade". Top Gear Rally was memorable for its wonderfully spot-on handling, catering for mud-slinging powerslides and crosscountry ramshackle racing with style and aplomb, utilising the analogue stick perfectly. The pedestrian opposition and bare tracks let it down, but - in the main - it was great.

Top Gear Overdrive tries hard to add to its predecessor and, for the most part, succeeds. That said, it's probably the most difficult game you'll have played in a long while. It's not that the opposition are damn good – although they are - it's that the majority of them start half a lap ahead of you and only a classically driven lap, adhering perfectly to the







racing line, will see you succeed. Additionally, you'll have to memorise each of the six courses' four-or-so shortcuts and use them ruthlessly every race. It's enough to make you rip your hair out. But - crucially - even though you'll often switch off your N64 in anger, these flaws don't make you want to guit for good.

To liven up the action, power-up-style nitros, cashrelated car improvements and San Francisco Rush-style

jumps have been added. While these first two features work well, the gravity-defying jumps are ludicrously unfair. They invariably appear on a corner and throw you into a wall or over the side of the track, with explosive results that waste valuable seconds. This is an ill-judged and unnecessary concession to arcade thrills and spills. Overdrive's simplified handling irks, too, removing much of Rally's subtlety, with only the smashingly useful handbrake turn distinguishing it.

Ultimately, though, Top Gear Overdrive tries hard and proves - eventually, and once you've got used to its flaws to be highly rewarding fun. Even if male-pattern baldness inducingly so. ★★★ Jes Bickham

OVERDRIVE PAINTS THE EYEBALLS WITH GLORIOUSLY METALLIC CARS

Uppers & Downers

Speedy ■ Looks utterly

- astounding

 A mighty
- racing challenge

 Well-designed

be better

- Weedy
 Just a little
 bit too hard ■ Tolerance
- destroying jumps and crashes

 Handling could

New Nintendo 64 Games



Penny Racers

- Publisher: **THQ** Developer: **Takara** Price: **£39.99**
- Release date: on sale now
- Plavers: 1-4

Teensy car racing powered by clockwork. The Japanese love it, but how will it fare in the *Turismo*-devoted UK?

■ Appropriately, for a game based on clockwork toy cars, the most remarkable thing about *Penny Racers* is its complete lack of speed. You don't so much wheel-spin off the starting line as pull away carefully, like a trilbywearing pensioner with a boot full of nitroglycerine bottles.

Continents drift quicker than the vehicles accelerate in *Penny Racers* (the latest in a long line of inexplicably-big-in-Japan *Choro Q* clockwork car games). Travel half a lap after the not-exactly-turboassisted start and you'll still be pulling faces and rocking back and forth in your chair, trying to coax your tiny clockwork motor into something approaching top speed.

And when you do finally start moving at a decent pace, some of the worst computer cheating seen since Mario Kart's Princess Daisy home-straight comebacks puts a stop to any prolonged sense of velocity. Run over a mine or take a missile for your troubles and the prospect of a crawl back into the top half of your speedo is enough to have you lunging for the reset.

Persevere and things do pick up slightly. You can upgrade your car with new parts and bolt on weapons, and the heavy handling is actually quite fun to get to grips with. As well as sliding round the corners you can barrel roll over for really tight turns. There's loads of different vehicles – ranging from Minis to dustbin lorries – and you can design your own courses; something that would be a great feature if only the actual racing had more to recommend it.

Basically, as much as you may chuckle at *Penny Racer's* comedy horn noise, the fact remains that with classics like *Mario Kart* out there, *Penny Racer's* all round lack of dazzle and speed is only ever going to leave you wound up like a clockwork car. * *Robin Alway*





■ Cut straight through the technique and into the carnage – it's easy with *Blitz*'s help screens.



Uppers & Downers

First down

- Suitably violent
- Speedy action ■ Easy to play

First aid

- Limited one-player mode
- Poor Al
 A bit too easy to play

CUT TO THE HIGHLIGHTS

NFL Blitz

- Publisher: GT Interactive
- Developer: Midway Price: £45
- Release date: on sale now Players: 1-2
- Extras: Rumble pak, controller pak

Like American football? Hate the idea of spending two hours just to get one game out of the way? Introducing NFL Blitz – NBA Jam with shoulder pads. Medic!

merican football in all its stat-heavy, slow-paced, stop-start glory doesn't appeal to many people on this side of the Atlantic. Quite why this should be is unclear, as millions of us watch some of the most sedentary sports imaginable – like cricket and snooker – but "gridiron" has never really caught on. Which is a shame, because underneath all the commercialism and hype there's an explosively brutal spectacle just waiting to break out and crack some heads.

NFL Blitz dispenses with the rulebook and cracks heads by the dozen. It's an arcade conversion — a very good one at that — and, as you'd expect from a game whose original purpose was to tempt punters to part with their small change, it's the most simple and accessible version of the sport around.

The teams are reduced to seven-a-side and your progress towards the endzone must be made 30 yards at a time, instead of the usual

ten. Consequently, almost every play consists of a huge pass, a thundering run and a crunching tackle at the end. As soon as the ball has been grounded there's the briefest of interludes – the Play Select screen pops up for no more than ten seconds – before you're thrown right back into the action and the players continue to perpetrate unspeakable acts of violence. The three-button control system means that there are no complicated moves to learn. In fact the game displays Help screens at regular intervals to tell you what the buttons do and to reveal the occasional secret move.

It's similar to the Wayne Gretzky Hockey games and the NBA Jam series – plenty of quick thrills, with the promise of lashings of gratuitous violence and a guaranteed high score at the end of it all. NFL Blitz emulates the arcade machine almost perfectly, including all the little touches, such as the timer on the Option screens and the password-protected player records. It even features an option to design your own plays, then save them on a Controller Pak and download them into an NFL Blitz '99 arcade machine.

NFL Blitz doesn't offer long-term one-player challenge, as it's easy to win if you concentrate. However, get a few mates round and it has an excellent multi-player tournament. An essential purchase if you like your games in 20-minute post-pub slices. ***

Or you could try...

NFL Quarterback Club '99 Acclaim **** A more realistic and simulation-based rendtiion of American football, perhaps best suited for those who are more familiar with the sport.





■ Make a touchdown and head straight back into the *Blitz* action.

A HOVER THAT'S DECIDEDLY TOO MUCH BOVVER

Knife Edge

- Publisher: Microware Developer: Kemco
- Price: £40 Release Date: on sale now Players: 1-4
- **■** Extras: Rumble Pak, on-cart backup

Shigeru Miyamoto's design genius (see page 66) is fully evident in Lylat Wars which serves as a lesson in how to turn a simple on-rails shoot-'em-up into an epic cinematic experience. Sadly, Kemco has been playing truant from Mr Miyamoto's classes.

nife Edge looks just like a lightgun game and feels just like a lightgun game. The only problem is that it isn't a lightgun game. Which kind of leaves it

floundering. You take the role of the nose-gunner in a jet fighter, shooting at aliens, while the N64 itself takes care of the infinitely more exciting job of piloting the hideous thing (next time you pop into your friendly neighbourhood game store. have a look at the delightful

Scalpel ■ Large bosses ■ Four-player mode ■ Erm... **Butter knife** ■ On rails gameplay
■ Boring graphics
■ Dull, d dull. Get the message?

Uppers & Downers

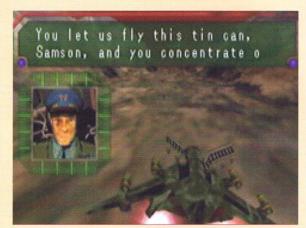
artwork on the Knife Edge box and you'll see exactly what we mean). It's like being at the world's best party, with pop stars and royalty and more booze than you could even think of drinking – and yet you're not allowed to leave the kitchen.

All the "action" takes place under a little cursor that you steer around the screen - position it over an alien, and then just pull the trigger to dispose of said extraterrestrial. Once you've shot down all the little green men in their little green flying machines, you take care of the obligatory boss monster and proceed to the next level, which is just more and more and more of the same.

Knife Edge is about as taxing as the kind of mental agility tests anthropologists try out on farmyard animals. Occasionally you are called upon to make a simple decision about which route you should take, though you'd be hard pressed to tell the difference between them.

If you really want to inflict this tedium on your friends, up to four people can play at once, controlling separate cursors. The only potential amusement to be had with the multi-player game is if a fist fight breaks out because someone has encroached on someone else's bit of the screen. The occurrence of such a brawl is highly unlikely though, because after the first five minutes of play you'll have either succumbed to peer pressure and plugged in GoldenEye instead, or you'll be phoning for an ambulance because your best mate has just swallowed his tongue.

The saddest part of the whole thing is the fact that Knife Edge might have been a half-decent game, if only it had been bundled with a lightgun. * **Martin Kitts**









■ Some of Knife Edge's bosses may look all right, but with the whole game played on rails don't expect much in the way of variety.





NFL Quarterback Club '99

- Publisher: Acclaim
- Developer: Iguana
- Price: £40 n Release date: on
- sale now Players: 1-4 ■ Extras: Expansion Pak, Rumble Pak, Controller Pak

Serious American Football doesn't get much more realistic than this. Acclaim pumps its new edition full of creatine and comes up with a Super Bowl of a sim.

■ Over Christmas 1997 NFL Quarterback Club '98 cleaned up in the sales charts, thanks to its official Brett Favre and NFL licence and its hi-res graphics. Since then, developer Iguana has proved it knows more about using the hires modes than anyone, and new games such as WWF Warzone and Turok 2 have tested the limits. With this pedigree you'd expect a visual leap from Quarterback '98 to '99, and that's exactly what Iguana has delivered.

The game is so detailed that the only way to see everything is to zoom right in and use the slow motion replay. You'll notice the replay screens around the stadiums, the referee running to get a view of the action, the open receivers waving frantically, and the little dummies, fakes and shimmies all the players make. The ball even has "Wilson" written over the stitching. The degree of detail is incredible.

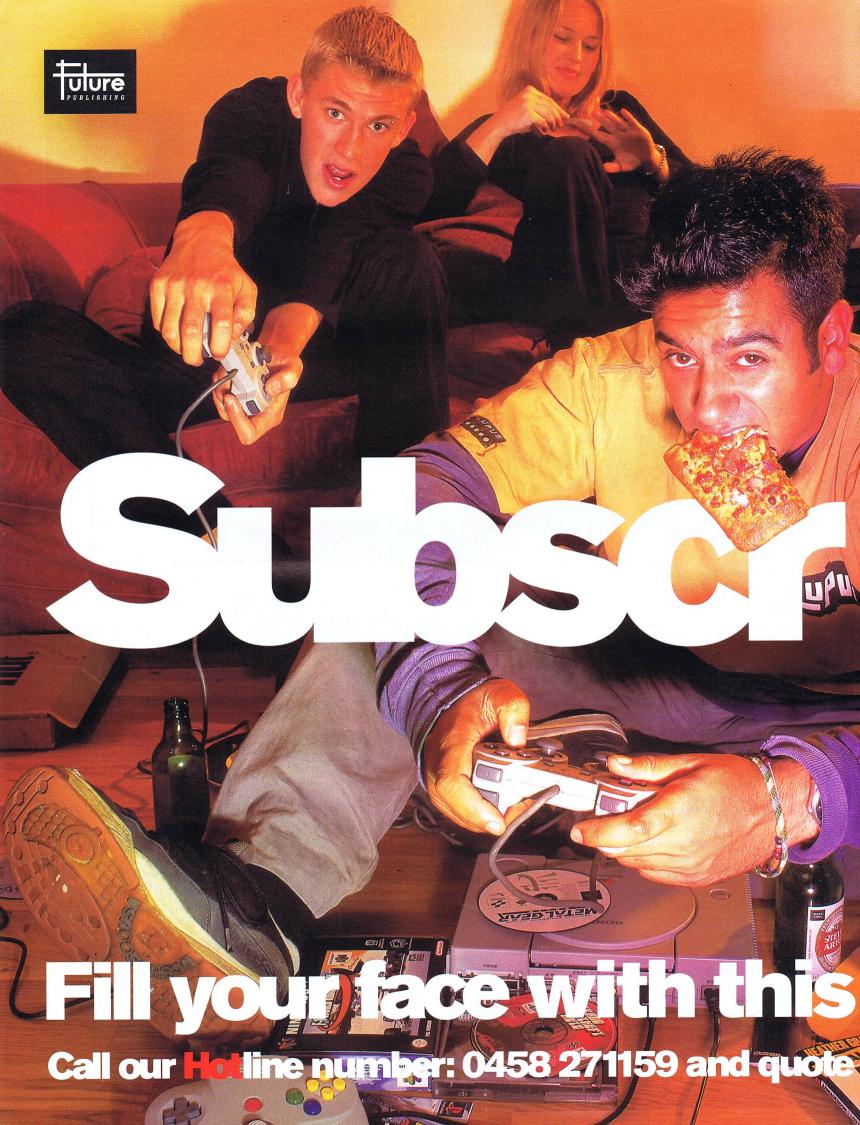
Fortunately, it plays much better than its predecessor, too. Tackles can be broken, and you can drag defenders behind you to get those last few inches. The passing game is still tricky, as the placement of the ball has to be perfect, but you'll spend weeks playing the game to finish a season so you'll get plenty of practice in along the way.

Frame rate suffers when you view the entire pitch, but that isn't likely to put off too many players, particularly once they see the Replay mode. Again, it's not for beginners, but for those who know and love their gridiron Quarterback Club '99 is the last word in American football sims.

Martin Kitts ****

Lylat Wars
Nintendo *****
Finely tuned blasting from Shigsy with the
blacest explosions in videopames.

With Walthing effects to die for.





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■ PHOTOGRAPHY: PETER CANNING/VIEWPOINT

New Dreamcast Games









DREAMCAST'S SHOWCASE GAME HAS COME TO KICK ASS

Virtua Fighter 3tb

■ There's no disguising VF3tb's coin-op roots.

Pirase Star & Button

■ Publisher: Sega of Japan ■ Developer: Sega AM2/Genki ■ Price: £59.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1-2 ■ Extras: Sega's Arcade Stick

The most complex and faithful console fighter in the world returns to grace the Dreamcast. So how do the muscle-bound protagonists shape up?

o the rest of the world, *Virtua Fighter* is just another

– albeit top quality – series of fighting games. To

Japanese gamers, it's much more than that. It's

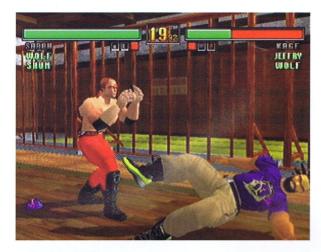
practically a religion. It's been three years since the
release of the first *Virtua Fighter 3* coin-op, but

walk into any arcade in Tokyo and you'll still find

banks of machines occupied. Few videogames have ever enjoyed this kind of staying power, especially in the ultra competitive, cut-throat world of arcade fighting games. Don't underestimate how important *Virtua Fighter* is on its home turf.

The reason for this level of fanaticism is its amazing level of depth. The more you play it, the more you realise how much there is to learn. Many veteran players argue that mastering *Virtua Fighter* is impossible – there's simply too much to take in. Certainly you might spend a year playing before mastering a single character (there are 12 in total), and in Japan – where games are taken very seriously – this degree of sophistication commands immense respect.

On the surface VF3tb (the "tb" stands for Team Battle) is deceptively simple. There are only four buttons: kick, punch, guard and side-step. And sure, beginners can play at a elementary level and simply enjoy thrashing away at



each other. They may even conclude that, as with most fighting games, victory is often determined by an equivalent of "scissors, paper, stone" (if you kick, say, when someone else punches, then you'll probably get the hit in, but if you kick and your opponent side-steps, he'll get the next shot in, and so on).

But don't be fooled. Spend a little time and you'll realise that combination button presses in conjunction with joystick movements access literally hundreds of moves. It takes a good while just to work out how to access a character's full set – and then you're presented with *Virtua Fighter's real* challenge; learning how to use those moves effectively.

And this is where the game's genius really shines through. Once you've seen a glimpse of how much game there is here, it takes a tremendous amount of effort to reach the next plateau of really understanding it all. There are so many tactics, strategies and nuances that at first it's easy to feel like you're in over your head. Stick at it, though, and you won't find a better fighting game.

IT'S A CLASSIC FIGHTING GAME THAT DESERVES TO BE RANKED ALONGSIDE THE BEST EVER

While this depth is undoubtedly *Virtua Fighter's* strength, it's also what has put some players off the series in the past. Whereas you can pick up *Tekken* or *Street Fighter* and get competent with the game relatively quickly, getting good at *Virtua Fighter* takes a massive investment of time and effort. Hopefully, Dreamcast's success will encourage more people to make this commitment.

So how does the Dreamcast Virtua Fighter stack up? Essentially, it's all here. All the characters, moves and locations have been faithfully ported from arcade to home system. It looks great, too. When Virtua Fighter 3 first hit the arcades, utilising the industry-leading Model 3 board, it was the best-looking game the world had ever seen. Three years later, it's still at the top, rivalled only by Sega's other Model 3 racers. It's a testament to the Dreamcast's power that such a faithful conversion has been possible. It isn't quite arcade-perfect, though. Tiny details are missing from the backgrounds. There's occasional polygon clipping and the shadows sometimes break up when you're in the air. On the floating pontoon level, for example, it's sometimes possible to continue fighting long after your character is effectively walking on water. Still, this is nit-picking, and the game is more than close enough for Sega to be proud especially when you consider that it's one of the first four titles for the new system, and wasn't even completed with the help of a full development kit.

If you can fault Sega for anything, it's that not much extra has been added for home play. A great coin-op



doesn't automatically make a great home game - they're designed for two different play experiences: one for a short and sweet two-minute thrill, the other for a more longterm fix. On-line and pocket-sized VMS features would've been a natural for Dreamcast's flagship title, but they're nowhere to be seen. You're awarded points for how efficiently you race through the one-player mode, which gives you something to aim for, and there's also the threeon-three Team Battle from the second edition of the coinop, but this doesn't add significantly to the game's replay value - you simply have to pick three characters to fight with in turn, instead of just one. And, like with most fighting games, you can race through the one-player mode right out of the box, by simply mashing buttons. If you intend getting value for money from VF3tb, then it'll be from the two-player mode.

One last thing. Many of the moves require button combinations that are near-impossible on the Dreamcast pad layout. This means you'll either have to re-learn how to hold your controller or invest in Sega's Arcade Stick. This is designed in the mould of the one used with the *VF3tb* coinop and works wonderfully.

Despite these blemishes *Virtua Fighter 3tb* is a huge success for Sega. It's a classic fighting game that deserves to be ranked alongside the best ever. The game still wildly succeeds as both a top-notch fighter and an awesome showpiece for Sega's new machine. If you've mucked around with fighting games in the past and want to move on, this is where it gets *serious*. ****



VS PAI



VS LION



■ Many people compare VF3tb to Tekken, but make no mistake – Sega's characters vary far more in terms of

Downers

Number three
■ Great

conversion of classic coin-op

■ 12 characters

and hundreds of

Number twos

■ Not quite
arcade perfect
■ One-player

game too short

You'll need a

committed friend

to fight with

moves
Unrivalled

depth and





New Dreamcast Games



■ While the racing of flowery pink hippos along ice floes is outlawed in most countries, in Japan it appears to be perfectly legal.

Uppers & Downers

Flappers
■ Mrs Cream, Sparky the Blue

it's mad Looks good

Penguin, and evil flying books. Yes,

enough to eat

Surprisingly

engaging races

Crappers

The novelty

does wear off after a while Lacks the real

gameplay pedigree of *Mario Kart*





LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW

Pen Pen Trilcelon

- Publisher: Sega Developer: General Entertainment
- Price: £59.99 Release date: on sale now (import)
- Players: 1-4

Dreamcast's best original launch game involves guiding a selection of flipper-equipped animals through a multi-disciplined ice race course. It may not be the game to save Sega, but it will certainly provide a few good laughs.

ome would blame drugs. Some would blame being dropped on the head as a nipper. Others, who've been playing videogames for a while, will simply chalk it up as yet another example of how, to Japanese game designers, madness is a way of life. Try to imagine the meetings at which Pen Pen Trilcelon's less-than-conventional concept was originally hammered out: "Yeah, it's like a racing game, except there's no cars, so instead you're in control of a cartoon animal sliding on its belly in a kind of crazy magic ice world. You propel yourself along the ground with your flippers, and there's going to be three different stages on each course which will be downhill, swimming and just... like... like... like walking along up steps and stuff, but there's also going to be big jellies to bounce off, sunken pirate ships, evil flying books and tiny hairy mammoths to get in your way. And

Somehow the Technicolor swimming/flapping/waddling meisterwork that is Pen Pen was sanctioned (three disciplines on an ice course - Tri-Ice-Ion, geddit?), and somehow it's completely brilliant. It shares the same set-up as Mario Kart and Diddy Kong; as an individual racer, you line up against six CPU opponents, while in Versus Mode up to four people can play at once.

the accompanying music will be played by the fastest, most

stupid brass band on God's Earth. Whaddya reckon, boss?"

Controlling your character of choice – be it a penguin, shark, walrus, or other bi-flippered creature - requires you to use the analogue stick and a single button key. Your

main job is to press the button rhythmically in order to build up a steady flipper action. Unlike Mario Kart there are no weapon power-ups, but you can barge opponents off steps or into lakes.

Pen Pen Trilcelon looks great. The depth and solidity of the rendered landscape and characters are fabulous, with none of the pernicious pop-up, polygon break-up or fogging that you can see in existing console titles. It's almost as if the developer became so excited about the possibilities provided by a new colour palette, that it became a challenge to make use of every shade on offer.

The nature of the game makes it difficult to discuss Pen Pen in sensible terms, though, and the addictive gameplay sneaks up on you unexpectedly from beneath a blanket of pure comedy. Among the playable characters are Jaw the menacing purple shark, Ballery the portly pink hippo or

THE MUSIC IS PLAYED BY THE THE **FASTEST BRASS BAND ON EARTH**

Sneak the orangey thing who swims upside down. No, we don't know what Sneak is, but one of the loading screens depicts him grinning feverishly next to a row of postboxes; a scene captioned with the touching phrase "Sneak is easily exalted". Leading a particular character to victory rewards you with an item, such as flippers or skis, which you can use to your advantage in future races. Although what help a red top hat might be has yet to be revealed.

It's highly probable that Pen Pen Trilcelon may never be officially released in the UK, since publishers over here tend to unfairly dismiss this kind of thing as Japanese nonsense. It's also worth noting that this kind of off-the-wall game often accompanies a new console's launch, and - given the scarcity of alternative titles and a natural desire to want the best for a new system – is often awarded praise that, a few months down the line, seems innapropriate. Will future Dreamcast releases diminish Pen Pen's appeal? Maybe. But for now we like it and if an import machine has made depressing reading of your bank statement, this is the light relief you need. ★★★ Sam Richards





■ It's Sparky the blue penguin thing. He can swim, he can flap, he can waddle, and he can bounce around on oversized jellies. Marvellous.





IT'S A MONSTER

FIFTY STORIES HIGH AND FULL OF RAGE

Godzilla

- Publisher: **Sega of Japan** Developer: **Sega** Price: **£59.99 (import price)**
- Release date: on sale now (Japan)
- Players: 1

Porta-God

■ The Godzilla VMS ame was released before the Dreamcast in Japan. It plays as a virtual pet, where you breed a small dinosaur and build up his powers by playing a little firing game. The VMS can then be plugged into another VMS (where the two little monsters will quite harrowingly battle to the death) or plugged into the **Dreamcast where** your pet is transformed into fully 3D monster to battle against other small baddies and Godzilla himself.

Japan's favourite over-grown lizard, dusted down and doing what he likes best – going to town and causing destruction on a devastating scale.

t's always difficult for an actor to escape typecasting, with smart, chiselled English gents destined to play The Bad Guy for as long as they live and rubber-faced jesters pulling faces through predictable slapstick comedies. It's perhaps a problem that has troubled Godzilla over the decades. While he's unlikely to turn up as the lead in a summer romantic comedy or win the role of the next Bond, you can't help wondering how happy he is with his agent. After all, he only ever lands parts that involve wandering around Japan or New York smashing the place up, with only a Chewit tie-in for variety. Then again, apart from a few Jurassic Park rejects, you can't imagine anyone else joining the audition queue.

And walking around various cities in Japan smashing the place up is exactly what you do in *Godzilla* the game. To cut to the chase, it's one of the most tedious games in the history of videogaming. It's obvious what has been going on in the minds of the development team; they wanted a big-name game that looked fantastic. It had to ship with the first Dreamcasts, look good in screenshot-based

previews, fuel rumour and generate interest in a machine whose very existence is – to be honest – just as much "touch" as it is "go".

The game does *look* superb. Godzilla is huge, and trawls around Japan sending tower blocks flying with a flick of the tail, charging through stadiums and squishing millions of pounds worth of military hardware underfoot. We could go on, or we could just print some pictures. See the screenshots at the top of this page? Imagine them, only moving.

The problems lie with the gameplay or, to be more exact, the almost total lack of it. The levels are set around Japan. To progress from one to the next, you have to destroy all the pink blobs on the map. These are tanks that, along with the odd helicopter and UFO, are the only things that can kill you. You can walk over and stamp on the tanks within minutes of starting each level, and finish the game within an afternoon if you so desire, probably in time for Neighbours. The only challenge is avoiding the military's fire which, if it wasn't for the camera angles constantly obscuring your view, would be a doddle. You'll then spend the rest of the level padding the time out, smashing your way around the cities and reducing skyscrapers to rubble. To begin with this is quite good fun, but after about five minutes it becomes as dull as the dishwater in a student house (and equally unappetising).

Many enthusiastic faces appeared in the *Arcade* office when our Dreamcast arrived, eager to see what the orange-swirled one had to offer. Not one of these people lasted more than five minutes on *Godzilla* without wanting to turn it off. Our guess is that the experience will be the same for you. * *Rich Pelley*





July

■ Publisher: Sega of Japan
■ Developer: Sega ■ Price:
£59.99 (import price)
■ Release date: on sale now
(Japan) ■ Players: 1

Indecipherable, comic-style adventure game.

■ The 7th of July 1999 is, as far as we can work out, the day that Nostradamus predicted the world we know will end and a new world will begin. Bad luck, then, if your birthday falls on the 8th you should probably think about having your party the weekend before. But what on Earth any of this has to do with July the game. we've absolutely no idea. It's Dreamcast's text-based adventure game and sadly we don't even know enough Japanese to reply "a little" when someone asks us "Do you speak Japanese?" in, obviously, Japanese.

This language barrier therefore renders the whole game entirely unplayable. Or, at least, it would if we could actually find any game as such to play. But we couldn't. There's no animation, so the entire game is spent conversing with odd manga-looking people (and, at one-point, a cat). The conversations are very one-sided - only a couple of times do you get to chose a reply - not, of course, that you have the faintest idea what you are saying. The challenge must somehow come from choosing which location to visit - every so often you're brought back to a map which you can move around on. But for the most part, you'll be staring blankly at the screen, repeatedly pressing A and wondering exactly What The Hell's Going On.

When it came to writing this review there was a bit of debate in the Arcade office about what score to give July. It's not fair to punish a game just because you don't understand it, argued one side. If you can't play it then it's no fun and should be marked accordingly, said the others. Our conclusion? As a deterrent to your accidentally buying the thing, we'll rate it rock-bottom then review it again if it ever turns up in English. Now, how do you get this thing to do half a star? ★ Rich Pelley

New Dreamcast Games





EDGEHOGGING THE LIMELIGHT





■ Feeling Supersonic? Graphically, Sonic Adventure looks fantastic, with a 3D world more complex and moving faster than Nintendo's Super Mario 64.







Sonic Adventure

- Publisher: Sega of Japan Developer: Sonic Team
- Price: £59.99 Release date: on sale now (Japan)
- Players: 1 Extras: VMS

It's the game we've all been waiting for. Sonic returns in a make-or-break game for Dreamcast. Has the spiky speed merchant still got the legs?

rom the Sega Master System to the Saturn, Sonic has remained Sega's flagship character and mascot. As such, he's one of a very few widely recognisable videogame icons. Let's face it, even your Granny could point out Sonic in an identity parade if he nicked her handbag. With power, however, comes responsibility. And all Sega's hopes are pinned on Sonic doing for Dreamcast what Mario did for Nintendo 64.

So is Sonic Adventure any good? The game is essentially two games in one: there's the "Sonic" bit, and then there's the "adventure" bit. They are two distinct parts, so we'll look at each separately.

The Sonic element is very much arcade-style Sonic the Hedgehog as you'll remember it. You still collect rings (and the Dreamcast still goes "ping" each time you do). Baddies are killed by jumping on their heads. If you get it wrong, Sonic takes a hit and his rings scatter in all directions. There are power-ups hidden inside little TV sets. Sonic can still bunch into a ball for extra speed. If you've ever played a Sonic game before, you'll know exactly what to do.

Except, of course, that it's all in glorious 3D. And, thankfully, it looks great – a lot better than N64's Super Mario 64 and considerably better than the other Dreamcast games we've seen so far. Sonic games have always been about speed, and so a large part of the game is spent legging it as fast as possible "into" the screen. The game world flashes by at lightning pace, offering a hint at just the sort of power that lies under Dreamcast's white bonnet.

You can stop and look around - and you're not hemmed





■ Talking Japanese. This Japanese version of Sonic suffers the same fate as the Japanese Metal Gear Solid, where the high proportion of Japanese text adds an extra layer of difficulty to the non-Japanese audience.

THERE'S JUST SO MUCH TO SEE.

Uppers & Downers

■ Great graphics
■ Tried 'n' trusted
Sonic gameplay
■ Two games for the price of one

Chronic

- The adventure is all in Japanese
- You're not always in control

in to a particular track at all. You can explore off of the beaten path, scout out your own shortcuts and search for hidden goodies. The camera rotates with the trigger buttons, and you can look around with the D-pad. But it's hurtling along at maximum revs that makes Sonic Adventure so much fun to play, and so vou'll often find vourself whizzing happily past interesting diversions, just because you don't want to slow down.

There's just so much to see. Mouths will drop when you get to the end of the first level, run along a collapsing bridge and the camera swings around to reveal the chase of the sharks sending the boardwalk flying. A huge whirlwind encapsulates the next level, and the graphical effect is amazing as you are picked up from the end of one platform and dumped on a higher one. Make no mistake, Sonic Adventure is performing graphical trickery at a level never seen before on a home console.

There are a couple of problems. At times the camera doesn't quite manage to keep up with the action. You get the feeling that the lag is a little stage managed ("hey, this game's so fast even the camera can't keep up!") but it's also off putting. And in conjunction with the wobbly analogue controller, keeping Sonic on the straight and narrow is sometimes harder than it should be. The other problem, as with all Sonic games, is that occasionally you feel a little like a passenger on a rollercoaster. It's all very well pinging off red bumpers here and loopthe-looping there, but a lot of these moments are set-pieces. You're just along for the ride.

But let's move on to the "Adventure" element. Between the action levels you find yourself in a small, bustling holiday town. It's fun to explore, if only to take in the sights and check out the graphics. Cars stop and let you cross, water ripples as you

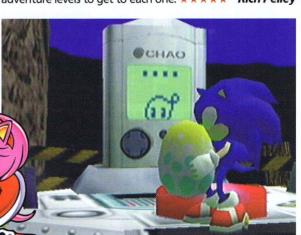
jump into the swimming pool, Sonic leaves little trainer marks on the sand. You also use this town as access to the action

MOUTHS WILL DROP WHEN YOU GET TO THE END OF THE FIRST LEVEL. jump into the swimming pool, town as access to the action levels. You can go back to whichever levels you like as Sonic or as the other

characters (Tails, Knuckles, Amy and all) once you've rescued them from elsewhere in the game. Entry to a new level opens up when you finish a prior one.

But you're really meant to be talking to people. And, considering that 90% of the communication takes place in Japanese text, this is quite tricky. It's not a problem that renders the game unplayable, more of one that requires a degree of trial and error. Obviously, when the game is released in the UK this will all be in English.

So what do we think of it all? Sonic Adventure looks great and is a lot of fun to play. It's a bit like going to Alton Towers. The arcade sections are short and fantastic, it's just that you have to queue up for up to an hour on the adventure levels to get to each one. **** Rich Pelley



■ As with *Godzilla*, the Dreamcast's VMS plays an integral role in *Sonic* Adventure. To breed your LCD creature, you have to find an egg in the main game and take it to a special machine (as shown on the left). A new life will be born, and you can set him to play in his own little playground with all the other little animals you've rescued in a special sub-game.



■ To the left: the fantastic roller-coaster section of Windy Valley, the fastest thing you'll have ever played on a videogames console.

Other Systems

FEEL THE FORCE IT'S TIME TO FACE VADER. AGAIN

COIN-OF

Star Wars Trilogy Arcade

■ Maker: Sega ■ Developer: Sega Am12 ■ Release date: out now ■ Players: 1

It's taken a long time for Sega to follow up *Star Wars*, but it's well worth the wait. And it's coming from a galaxy, far, far away very soon.

fter *Star Wars* hit the silver screen in the late '70s, the world was never quite the same again. To this day, adults and kids alike utter the phrase "Use the Force, Luke" whenever it seems appropriate (for instance, when trying to sink that tenth pint). It also inspired one of the most fondly-remembered coin-op games of all time: Atari's

Star Wars, a vector graphics-based simulation of the attack on the Death Star. It was an instant classic. TIE-fighters screeched towards you. When you died, the voice of Obi-Wan Kenobi reassured you that "The force will be with you, always." Best of all, you could "use the force" in the trench sections (by not firing any weapons up until the very last minute) and if you succeeded in this mini-quest you were awarded a special "force" bonus.

It was great. But now it's up to Sega to continue the *Star Wars* legacy in the arcade. It tried once before, a few years back (and a conversion of the game became one of 32X's lacklustre line-up), but now Sega's really going for it. *Star Wars Trilogy Arcade* features three stages: the attack on the Death Star; the battle against the Walkers on Hoth; and a race through the forests of Endor on speeder bikes.

Each standard level is your standard shoot-



■ Once again, the Rebellion's hopes rest on you.

'em-up fare. The vehicles travel on rails (but there's so much going on, you hardly notice), while you target your guns' crosshairs around the screen. The other control is an innovative "help" button – you can activate this at certain points during the game to, well, bring in some extra help when it's all getting a bit too much.

Interspersed between these (very deep) levels are two special stages in which you, as Luke Skywalker, take on first Boba Fett and then Darth Vader armed with a light sabre. If you're lucky enough to get this far, you then have the joys of a final level attacking the second Death Star above Endor. Don't expect to take on this challenge first time round though – we spent £20 getting there. But it was worth it.

Star Wars Trilogy Arcade is great, and if it doesn't get you battering your mates with old tinfoil tubes, nothing will. **** Cam Anderson

BEAT GUES ON COOL MIX-MASTER CUT FASTER

COIN-OP



Beatmania

■ Maker: Konami ■ Developer: Konami

■ Release date: **out now** ■ Players: **2**

Live out your DJ fantasies with Japan's current coin-op craze – Boy George eat your heart out.

eah man, it was wicked! There was these banging choons, and I looked up, right, and it were Sasha on the decks, wunnit!" With the spread of club culture and its increasing crossover into the videogame market, it's highly likely that this kind of incisive commentary isn't completely alien to you. Konami has coupled this love of the dance scene with a passion for coin-ops and produced the awesome *Beatmania*.

Currently in its 3rd Mix edition (it's been something of a phenomenon in Japan for over a year), Beatmania puts you in the sneakers of a DJ, competing against the machine to stick to the beat of some increasingly complex tracks. In essence, it's a very similar concept to Simon – very easy to learn and a yet still a difficult game to master.

The control system features five keys and a turntable that you must hit or scratch at certain points of the track,

with points being awarded for "natural rhythm" across a variety of musical styles including reggae, hip hop and rave.

This 3rd Mix also features a competitive mode for two players. However, Konami claims that Beatmania wasn't originally seen as a competitive game... and it shows. It's like playing a duet, with both parties coming in at different parts of the track. Trouble is, if one player is a little more skilled than the other it soon devolves into a cacophony.

Beatmania may well suffer initially from its off-the-wall look, with people reluctant to make complete arses of themselves on a game they haven't got a clue about. But Konami has plugged it as not only being fun to play, but fun to watch; a boast borne out at my local arcade, where I found crowds of people watching the coin-op DJs torture the turntables. And with music creation software currently being flogged for both the PC and PlayStation, it looks like Beatmania could finally get a break in the UK. Watch out for it – it's definitely a chart topper. ***



■ Beatmania 3rd Mix – arcade fun for budding spin doctors.



MACINTOSH

CD-ROM drive

Lode Runner 2

- Publisher: MacSoft■ Developer: Presage
- Software Price: £29.99
- Release date: on sale now
 Players: 1-8 Requires:
 PowerMac. 16Mb RAM.

The classic monk-dodging platform puzzler of the '80s gets a 3D makeover.

■ Get the gold, dig a hole, dodge the monk! Lode Runner was an addictive hit back on the Apple II. Mindful of its success, MacSoft has overhauled this classic across five surreal 3D worlds. Playing as the lode runner it's your job to run, climb and swing around 150 levels, solving puzzles to collect gold, while avoiding traps and patrolling mad monks.

You are aided in your task by extra items and power-ups scattered around the play-zone. You are also equipped with a gun that can temporarily "phase out" parts of the scenery. Just to make life complicated, though, you can't shoot the monks; the only way to despatch them is to blast the path in front of them, so they fall into the void surrounding each level.

You should never judge a book by its cover, so I guess the same must apply to games and their packaging. Lode Runner 2's box is the fanciest I've seen in a while; stylishly designed with lots of embossing and metallic effect printing. Glance at the above screen shot, however, and you'll see that the in-game graphics aren't so impressive and are just too small – it's far too easy to loose the tiny runner among the elaborate scenery. You can pick the colour of your runner's outfit, but you'd better pick carefully, or you may never see them again.

Adding to these problems of scale is the inherent difficulty that's a constant in isometric-viewed games – you have to try and direct a character diagonally using only the keyboard. These concerns leave you with a game that only fanatics will take the time to get into. A shame, as behind the odd exterior lies a inventive puzzler.



GAME BOY

Super R.C. Pro-Am

- Developer: Rare Publisher: Nintendo Release date: on sale now Price: £9.99 Players: 1-4 (with link cable and four-player adaptor)
- A Nintendo Classics rerelease for Rare's pocketsized black 'n' white racer with attitude.
- Mighty UK code empire Rare didn't suddenly become best mates with Nintendo overnight, you know. Long, long before the company unleashed the likes of GoldenEye on an unsuspecting N64-owning world, the company ditched the Speccy for Nintendo's original console the NES. At this time Rare coded, among other things, R.C. Pro Am, a stunningfor-the-time knockabout racer that's still fondly remembered by those us who are old enough to have been around in the era of the grey slip-on.

This Game Boy version of *Pro-Am* (this time re-released on the cheaper-price Nintendo Classics label) might look pretty basic, particularly with the Game Boy Color spreading its multi-hued spell throughout the world, but it ticks all the right gameplay boxes with Rare's customary grace.

The nippy remote control cars and isometric view suit the Boy's mini screen perfectly, but it's the vicious computer-opponent Al and pleasingly skiddy handling that make this such fun to play (it was possibly the first game to use power sliding). You're only ever racing against three opponents and each time you need to avoid fourth place if you're to go on to the next, increasingly twisty track, but the outrageous computer car cheating makes sure that every single race is fraught to the finish line. The speed-up arrows, and pick-up missiles and bombs only add to the fist waving "I'll get you" recriminations

As well as desperately wanting to triumph over the dishonest CPU cars, you're encouraged to keep playing Pro-Am by being given the chance to upgrade your car. You can pick up new tyres, motors and batteries as you race round, with bonus cars acting as a Ridge Racer-like reward for winning your heats. It's not exactly Gran Turismo in miniature, but you could guite easily see off a few packs of AA batteries and an infinite number of dull train journeys before you tire of Pro-Am's simple-vetaddictive racing. Another great game to add to the outstanding Rare CV. ★★★★ Robin Alway

GAME BOY COLOR

THE BEST NEW RELEASES FOR THE BOY COLOR

Every issue brings more full-colour releases for Nintendo's powerful, purple, pocket-filling pleaser. This issue, Reviews Editor Robin Alway buys the farm.



Game & Watch Gallery 2

- Developer: NintendoPublisher: Nintendo
- Release date: on sale now
- Price: £19.99 Players: 1
- Extras: Game Boycompatible

It's just a little bit of history repeating...

■ They might not have quite the allure of Grandstand's Astro Wars but Nintendo's handheld Game and Watches were as desirable as £100 trainers and mobile phones to a nation of pre-teens in 1980.

The thing you forget is how simple the games were. Try the original *Parachute*, *Helmet*, *Chef*, *Vermin* and *Donkey*, and you'll find it hard to believe that you spent so long playing them.

Mindful of this fact, Nintendo has done a fine job of layering on value-adding features. You get enhanced, full-colour versions of each game, as well as some classic Nintendo gameplay – bonus stars, coin collecting and secret bits.

Nintendo has given some of its earliest videogaming work proper respect here. Everything's beautifully presented and there's more novelty surprises than in a Kinder Egg battery farm. You're amply rewarded in the Gallery section where tips and messages are posted as you clock-up high scores and new modes are revealed. Get enough stars from both classic and modern versions of the games and you can access a recording studio where Mario, Peach and Toad (on drums oddly enough) play tunes for you. All in all, this repackaging of Nintendo's ancient history has been done with the kind of care and detail you'd expect, and comes highly recommended to fans of Shigs and the boys. ★★★★



Harvest Moon

- Developer: Victor Interactive Software
- Publisher: THE Games
- Release date: on sale now
- Price: £19.99 Players: 1-2 (with link cable)

Down on the farm...

■ Unless you're familiar with the original SNES version, it's probably fair to say you've never played anything like *Harvest Moon*. You chose a male or female farmer, pick a pet for company and start on an all-consuming quest to turn an abandoned homestead into a flourishing farm. With chickens.

Clear your land, till the soil, plant some seeds and wait for your first crop so that you can sell the resulting veg. Once you start reaping your hard-earned rewards you can expand into livestock and then sell the goods you produce.

With horses, house extensions and harvest festivals to follow, don't imagine *Harvest Moon* is easy. It needs management on a C&C scale as you battle against the elements, learn to rotate different crops and earn enough money to keep food on the table.

If the whole son/daughter of the soil concept doesn't appeal, it's only because you've yet to experience *Harvest's* completely involving concept. The attention to detail is at Nintendo levels, both in the graphics and in the sheer amount of *stuff* that's included

. Before long you'll care about your farm enough to sneak a few minutes of cow-stroking in the middle of important business meetings. At the end of the day, cattle safely in their shed, this is character-building stuff and right up there with Tetris and Zelda as something you must play. And you will be it playing it until the cows come home. ***



Tweety and Sylvester – Breakfast on the run

- Developer: Infogrames
- Publisher: Infogrames
- Release date: on sale now ■ Price: £19.99 ■ Players: 1
- Price: £19.99 Players: 1
- Extras: Game Boycompatible

At last. Your chance to throttle that canary.

■ This Warner Bros license should be perfect Game Boy Color fare, taking full cartoony advantage of the purple one's pigment-tastic capabilities, as well as letting you finally get Sylvester's catty claws around the annoyingly voiced canary once and for all.

And it starts well, with a sideviewed, 2D platforming section that sees Sylvester chasing Tweety in glorious Techicolour. Sadly, it all goes duo-chrome for the next isometric platforming section, and this makes up most of the game.

Entering the canary's house, you need to solve simple puzzles, negotiate obstacles and avoid enemies. Finding keys and shifting boxes to jump over barriers isn't even going stretch the younger players that this is aimed at. Worst of all, the poor controls make it a frustrating struggle to get away from baddies.

These flaws are a shame, because the graphics — even in the less impressive isometric sections — bode well for other Warner Bros titles. There's some enjoyment to be had as Tweety Pie stays constantly just out of your grasp, but ultimately this is another release that's been coded for kids with a shoulder-shrugging "Will this do?" attitude. Lets hope Bugs Bunny gets a bit more in the way of gameplay... ★★

iteme

On-line gaming







Or a rousing battle cry from a revitalised Sega? Dreamcast could make or break the one-time videogame champion of the world, but what does the Net have to say about it?

epends where you look, really. If you're after the official, "Dreamcast is brilliant and you'd be a fool not to get an import model now" line, you'll have to head for Sega's official sites. Assuming that you want the gospel in English, Sega's Dreamcast site can be found at http://www.sega.com/spotlight/ features/dreamcast/. Of course, if you have a smattering of Japanese, you can enjoy the official line with a sprinkling of the now; Dreamcast is out in Japan so the official Japanese site at http://www.sega.co.jp/ dreamcast/ is rooted firmly in the present tense, focusing on the triumvirate of so-so titles available at launch, and looking forward to the approaching winners. Sega Rally 2, anyone? Or are you too busy with Gran Turismo to care?

Naturally Arcade already has a Dreamcast, locked away in our testing chambers, but we're in a global minority of 150,000. And since most of those 150,000 lucky people who managed to buy a Dreamcast on the day of launch are Japanese, that puts us in an even tinier minority. This given, you'd expect the Web to be bare of Dreamcast sites because no bugger actually has one. Tish pish: that's never stopped anyone before, so naturally there are plenty of sources for the latest Dreamcast news, such as Dreamcast HQ: http://www.dreamcast-hq.com/, which is already hot off the mark with the latest cheat codes for Virtua Fighter 3tb. Dreamcast HQ follows the usual template for any half-decent fan site: the latest headlines, previews of upcoming titles, and of course those reviews. Er, at least, there will be reviews when the team finally gets its import machines. Expect almost identical coverage at the likes of Dreamcast Zone (http://dreamcastzone. hypermart.net/), Dreamcast Extreme (http://www.dcextreme.com /index2.html), and possibly the coolest of the lot for stubbornly sticking to one of the original development names for the stupidly-monikered Dreamcast: Katana Edge (http://www.katana-edge.com/).

What'sNew! 発売スケジュール **AboutDreamcast** ソフトウェアデータベース DreamcastQ&A 厉害极



■ Dreamcast on-line: vet another fine example of just how excited some people get about the prospect of a new videogame system.

So, what are you going to do? You're unlikely to get a Dreamcast until it's officially released over here. So, as a public service, I bring you the Dreamcast game you can play now. It's the "find a Web site that uses the word Dreamcast in its title but has nothing to do with the Sega Dreamcast" game. Here are a couple of my favourites: http://www. dreamcastle.com/ will tell you all about Sexativa; a herbal treatment that'll enhance

your sex drive. If you need cooling off, take a look at http://www. dreamcastle. com/tungs. The merest mention of Doctor Tung's Tongue Scraper should put you off everything for a good half hour. Ugh.

Web Ring Moving in circles

■ Going round in circles on the Net isn't as easy as it sounds, but we've done it...

Ain't it Cool News http://www.aint-it-coolnews.com/

■ All the latest Hollywood gossip and the previews that the movie industry doesn't want you to see. As well as links, including one to...

Film Threat http://www. filmthreat.com/

Drink in the worst the movie industry has to offer, then head off towards the scary acres of

Spumco http://www. spumco.com/

Ren and Stimpy creator, John Kricfalusi's here and the Ren and Stimov spirit lives on in Spumco's on-line toon. The Goddamn George Liquor Program. It links to.

Centre for the **Easily Amused** http://www.amused.com/

■ Spumco's enormous page of weird links brings us here, to the home of a million ways of wasting vour time on-line. Finished? Go to...

Unknown Movies Page http://www.coastnet.com/ greywizard/

■ A database of all those films no-one's ever heard of, with some similarly pointless links to...

Dark Horizons http://www.darkhorizons.c om/

■ Back to the movies, with an upand-coming Australian news site. Its links page returns us to...

The Obscure Store and **Reading Room** http://www. obscurestore.com/

■ More weird news that you'll never find in the papers or on the television. It's almost too scary for words; run like the wind towards...

Drudge Retort

http://www. drudge.com/

■ The Drudge Report: A daily update of the news that The Man doesn't want you to read. The Drudge Retort: A clever parody featuring the news that's just too weird to be believed. Among its many daughter sites is...

Cruel Site of the Day

http://www.cruel.com/

■ Don't follow any of the links from this page if you think Chris Morris and Victor Lewis-Smith aren't funny. Go here instead...

WWWF http://www. wwwfights.com/

If Simon Templar and James Bond had a fist fight, who would win? Enjoy a selection of unlikely made-up fights. Then head on to...

CD-ROM of the Month



Encarta Reference Suite 99

- Publisher: Microsoft
- Developer: Microsoft
 Price: £99.99
- Release date: on sale now
- Requires: Pentium, 16Mb RAM, Win 95

Granted this is hardly cutting-edge stuff, but you can't play games all the time. These reference tools give you an insight into the world around you, an understanding of other cultures, a chance of winning the pub quiz, etc.

But what exactly are you getting for your moolah? Well, first out of the appropriately

weighty box is Encarta Encyclopaedia Deluxe 99. Long the world's favourite encyclopaedia, the 99 incarnation offers over 32,000 in-depth articles on everything from Arsenal strikers to zoology, backed up by some 18,000 pictures, sound-bites, videos and animations and 8,500 hyperlinks to further facts on the Web.

If your interests carry you further afield, then World Atlas 99 has 1.2 million places, 7,000 geographical articles, 3,500 images, videos and sound-clips, 12 world tours and plenty of interactive maps.

Completing the package, Microsoft's Bookshelf 99 proffers interactive versions of Roget's Thesaurus, Chambers Dictionary, Bloomsbury Treasury of Quotations, and Harrap's French and German Concise Dictionaries. A steal at £99.99 and, once you've taken advantage of the £20 money back offer, it's more like grand Chris James

Tired? Listless?

In need of a boost?



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FUTURE GAMER: a magazine covering PC, PlayStation and N64 games. We deliver to your email address every week - free of charge.

DOSAGE: adults and children – 1 issue to be taken with liquid, weekly.

WARNING:
Contains Humour



1. Wheel 64

- For: N64
- Price: £49.99 ■ Available from: **ASCII** on 01923 202097
- A cute steering wheel, much in keeping with the spirit of the N64. Indeed, ASCII suggests that the games best suited to this piece of hardware are Mario Kart 64, Diddy Kong Racing and F-Zero X. The Wheel 64 performs fluidly with all three, reflecting the skiddy, slidey nature of cartoon racers perfectly. It's light and comfortable

to use perched on either

your lap or a table, and it locks into a number of different positions. The use of hold switches makes it just as easy to control in a one-handed top-steering position handy if you need to keep a trigger finger free.

On the downside, the Wheel 64 is much less successful with more realistic racing sims such as F1 World Grand Prix, but in fairness that's not what it was designed for.

2. Cyber Shock Pad

- For: PlayStation
- Price: £19.99
- Available from: Blaze on 01302 325225
- Most third-party PlayStation joypads feel flimsy and look tacky. The Cyber Shock just manages to rise above those common failings, but is still largely superfluous. Rather than replicating the design of the Sony original, Blaze has plumped for an innovative shape. The D-Pad and the function buttons are

angled and positioned

more tightly. As far as the D-Pad goes, this seems like an attempt to make the digital control a little more fluid. Unfortunately, in any game where you need to carefully distinguish the horizontal axis from the vertical, things just get confusing. You'll also find that any game requiring you to constantly hover over the shoulder buttons will soon make your hands ache, as you find yourself twisting to conform to Blaze's less-thanergonomic design. **

3. Cyborg 3D Stick

- Price: £49.99
- Available from: Saitek on 01454 855050
- Every joystick however smooth or solid - will be uncomfortable to someone. Saitek has overcome this dilemma by making virtually every part of this intricatelydesigned product adjustable: screws fit its special tool, too, so there's no messing about with screwdrivers. The hand rest and jutting trigger make for relaxed

but accurate handling, and the rest and the throttle can be removed and repositioned on the other side of the joystick.

There are more control buttons than you need, and these can be configured to suit a game's individual requirements. If you're just beginning in the PC world, the installation and configuration processes may be off-putting, but if vou're a more committed gamer, the Cyborg 3D stick is everything you need. An accompanying CD contains versions of ten games including F1 97 and G-Police. ★★★★

4. Destiny Force **Feedback Steering Wheel**

- For: PC
- Price: £129.99
- Available from: LMP on 01992 503133
- Of all the wheels to boast force feedback capabilities recently, this is the only one to do it with any real credibility. It's fair to call this wheel weighty, chunky, and all those other masculine adjectives that ought to be applied to a racing wheel, and in fact the Destiny does simulate that true sense of power you feel when



in charge of a thrusting fuel-injected motor.

The advantage of the Destiny is its close-up feel – play a game with it and you should always choose the windscreen camera view to get the full effect. The disadvantage is its slightly gluey handling; you need to push harder than you think for simple turns, confusing your sense of perspective. It also costs rather more than both an arm and a leg, so beware. ***

5. Formula Race Pro

- For: PlayStation/ N64
- Price: **£69.99**
- Available from: Thrustmaster on 01276 609955
- play console games sat at a desk. This is what makes the table-bound design of most wheels so frustrating and the ergonomic design of the Formula Race Pro so refreshing, since it can be comfortably cradled in your lap with no apparent loss of control.

Closely based on the excellent Formula Sprint PC Wheel - but with careful alterations to button positioning to suit both PlayStation and N64 owners - the weight, spring and sensitivity of this wheel combine to make it the best currently available for console (even at its high price point). The only downer is the pedal board, which is flimsy and liable to be inadvertently kicked all over the floor during a frantic circuit. ***

6. Jordan Grand Prix Racing Wheel II

- For: PlayStation/ N64
- Price: **£59.99**
- Available from: Joytech on

Joytech on 01525 852900

■ Following hot on the heels of the original Jordan Grand Prix Racing Wheel (see Accessories, Arcade 1) comes a sequel. Don't get too excited just yet, though – the major differences are the addition of rubber grips and some work that gives a slightly more solid

feel to the whole wheel. While these are certainly welcome changes, the mildly irritating oversensitivity of the Jordan has not been rectified, despite the inclusion of a largely ineffectual and tricky-to-configure sensitivity control. When we put it through its paces on TOCA 2, the Jordan II represented the feel of a race wheel well enough, but it simply couldn't beat the accuracy of your average joypad. Although it fared better on arcade-based racers, the Jordan may still be too expensive to justify itself. **

7. N64 Passport

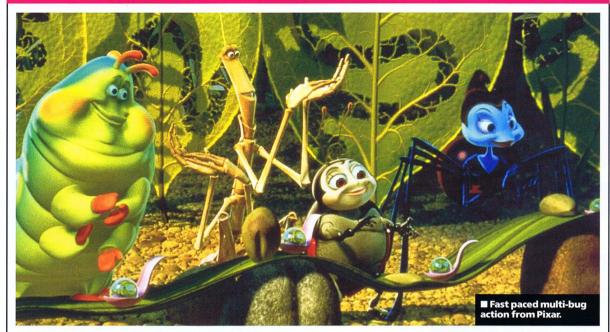
- For: **N64**
- Price: £30
- Available from: Visions on 0113 261 3424

■ Although Zelda had a nearly simultaneous worldwide release, UK N64 owners are usually left to stare enviously across the water as their American and Japanese counterparts play the best games months before a PAL release. So hurrah for the N64 Passport, which enables you to stick an import game in your slot and play

away having entered a special code to break through the game's territorial lock-out. The trouble is, although the built-in codes work with the majority of games, once cartridge manufacturers work their way round this, the Passport will be rendered obsolete immediately and, at the time of writing, the promised updated codes haven't materialised on the Internet. For the time being, the Passport does exactly what it says on the tin, albeit for rather more cash than we might have hoped. ***

Films & Video

Film of the Month



ELECTRICS AND ENTOMOLOGY TOGETHER AT LAST! OR TOGETHER AGAIN! WHATEVER...

A Bug's Life

■ Director: John Lasseter ■ Voices: Dave Foley, Kevin Spacey, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, **Denis Leary** ■ UK release: **5 February**

In which mad inventor and loser termite Flik defends his ant colony from certain destruction at the pincers of a rampant swarm of grasshoppers by constructing a huge fake bird and rounding up a troop of useless Flea Circus performers. Think The Magnificent Seven under a magnifying glass and you're kind of

generated movie about existential ant farms and then two come along at once. Having been beaten to the boxoffice by DreamWork's rather similar Antz, A Bug's Life was always going to be a tougher proposition to flog to seen-itdone-it punters. So it's sighs of relief all round at Pixar as its insect effort delivers enough requisite wows to wrench itself away from its potential Siamese twin reputation.

It's inevitable that two movies comparisons, so let's get the formalities out of the way. While the characters in Antz looked like bulimic ETs, the doe-eved Bua's Life cast look like they've been dragged from a '30s Disney short. While Antz relied on a sparky script to deliver the laughs, A Bug's Life goes all out for sense-spannering slapstick. And finally - and perhaps most importantly while Antz boasted a subversive adult edge to placate the grown-ups, A Bug's Life is aimed squarely at those with a single-digit age.

A Bug's Life is brimming with the kind of whacked-out invention you'd normally see in a Tex Avery short. Following his innovative Toy Story, Pixar maestro John Lasseter empties his creative-tornado-for-a-brain on to the screen, pummelling the viewer with a furious assault of sight gags. Some are subtle, but most, like the acrobatics of the Flea Circus sequence, mercilessly hammer the funny bone. Arguably, it would be a better movie if it weren't so insistent in its slapstick and slowed down for a second, but as a display in virtuoso cartooning, it's a firework in the eye for other animators.

Given Antz's heavyweight line-up of Stone, Stallone and Woody Allen, it's good to hear the gobs behind A Bug's Life holding their own. Dave Foley equips Flik with bumbling charm, Dennis Leary grouches as a macho Ladybird, but it's Kevin Spacey who steals the reels as cricket dictator Hopper. An end-credits sequence that will glue you to your seat with a selection of spoof out-takes rounds things off for what amounts to 90 minutes of retinafrazzling, brain-numbing fun. ★★★



Very Bad Things

- Director: Peter Berg
- Starring: Christian Slater, **Daniel Stern, Cameron Diaz**
- UK release: 29 January
- If the thought of oaring in Farrelly Brothers slapstick over Tarantino-trademarked violence sounds like a Very Bad Idea, then you're probably right. Shaking an uncomfortable mix of Jacobean revenge drama with none-moreblack comedy, Peter Berg's directorial debut aims at satire and ends up a confused, cynical exercise in designer sadism.

Admittedly, it all starts promisingly. A week before the big day with neurotic bride Laura (Diaz), groom-to-be Kyle (Jon Favreau) is dragged to Las Vegas by his troop of yuppie pals for a stimulant-fuelled stag do. Bottles are clanked, sherbert is snorted and nauseating camera-angles tip and bow until one of Kyle's entourage accidentally impales a hooker's head on a coat hanger while he tries to get his money's worth in a hotel bathroom. The panic of What To Do With The Body soon takes an illogical shift as bad-boy Boyd (Slater) cajoles his pals into sawing the hooker into burial-size bits and dumping the body in the Nevada desert. And then things get really stupid.

Berg soon sends the movie into a spiral of mean-spirited farce as the bickering friends gulp a dose of guilt and paranoia and start murdering each other to cover up the homicide. So as the body count rises to ludicrous levels, Christian Slater's shit-eating grin widens as he chucks an extra ten years on his Heathers psycho-teen and indulges in a Jack Nicholson impersonation that's less hammy homage, more acting karaoke. Only Cameron Diaz's schizo bride escapes with dignity intact in an otherwise misjudged, misanthropic comedy that wrongly assumes histrionics equal hysterics.★★

Shakespeare in Love

- Director: John Madden Starring: Joseph Fiennes, Ben Affleck, Gwyneth
- Paltrow, Geoffrey Rush ■ UK release: 29 January
- For a playwright who's had maggots chewing at his jaw for four hundred years, Shakespeare is very much alive and well and flogging his iambic pentameters to the great unwashed. Following Al Pacino's Looking For Richard and Baz Luhrmann's Romeo & Juliet, director John Madden

with such similar themes will draw

furthers the cause to make the Bard accessible to non-thesps with this commendably bawdy take on Shakie's so-called life.

A young, ruffled Shakespeare (Joseph Fiennes) is suffering from writer's block – not good when he's been commissioned to scrawl a play for dental monstrosity Philip Henslowe (Geoffrey Rush).

Struggling to finish Romeo & Ethel: A Pirate's Daughter, Shakie turns his attentions to amorous matters in the form of Lady Viola de Lesseps (Gwyneth Paltrow), who, unbeknownst to the Bard. disguises herself as a bloke to secure a role in his new play. What follows is a comedy of errors courtesy of Tom Stoppard's script, which balances genuine wit, bawdy slapstick and big-hearted romance in one satisfying whole.

Revelling in the script, the cast clearly have a laugh delivering or in the case of Rush dribbling their lines, and all gel impeccably (a considerable feat when you've got talent as diverse as Ben Affleck, Judi Dench and Martin Clunes on board). Mainstream enough to appeal to everybody, but dropping in in-jokes for Bard smart-arses, Madden has not only managed to make an accessible Shakespeare pic – he's also made a very funny movie. Go see what the fuss is about. ★★★★

Psycho

- Director: Gus Van Sant Starring: Vince Vaughn, Anne Heche, Julianne Moore
- UK release: 8 January
- When Gus Van Sant announced last April that he was about to



commit cinematic sacrilege by remaking Hitchcock's classic, the overall response from the movie community was a resounding "Why?". Now his publicity-baiting rehash is finally released in the UK, we're really none the wiser, as the end result is neither shocking enough to refire the controversy of the genre-busting original, nor inspired enough to offer a new slant on a much-imitated movie.

The early idea was for Van Sant to use Hitchcock's original storyboards and deliver a shot-forshot remake - and on the whole. that's exactly what you get. The motel details are the same, the screeching strings still shriek and the celebrated shower sequence gets a coat of gory Technicolor. So far, so fanboy.

Where Psycho really comes a cropper is in its performances. Celebrity lesbian Anne Heche gives a vacant reading of Janet Leigh's original feisty showerfodder, Julianne Moore is defiantly one-dimensional as Heche's sister and Vince Vaughn confirms all those miscasting fears by painting Norman Bates as a gibbering hick. Whereas Perkins' endowed Bates with a creepy childlike veneer, Vaughn goes all out for gratuitous loon, a voyeur who wanks away as his guests take a shower and sees storm clouds thundering across his eyes when he flies into one of his shit-fits. He may as well be blundering about the hotel with I AM A PSYCHO sprayed on his T-shirt. It might have worked in Scream, but it doesn't here.

If Van Sant's idea of updating Hitchcock's proto-slasher for the '90s is to shove in a shot of Viggo Mortensen flashing his blotchy arse and crowbar in some extra flesh during the shower scene, then he's sadly mistaken. For curiosity value, it's a diverting enough retread for fans of the original. For the average punter, it's more a case of This Film's Crap, Let's Slash The Geeks. It goes without saying that we look forward to Hollywood's



Casablanca remake (with Michael J Fox and Whoopi Goldberg) like a trowel up the arse. **

Dobermann

- Director: Jan Kounen Starring: Vincent Cassel, Monica Belucci, Tchéky Karyo
- UK release: 15 January

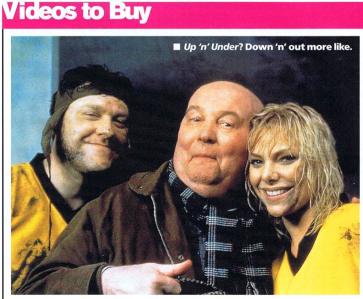
■ Opening with a computergenerated dog pissing on the credits and climaxing with one of the most spectacularly grisly demises in modern moviedom, Dobermann is a wake-up call for all those who think that French films begin and end with frosty threesomes and cafe-stool philosophers.

Our Gallic cousins have always favoured style over content in their movies, but Jan Kounen's audacious direction flings it way up to 11 as his screen-spasming camera-work makes MTV look like a BBC testcard. The plot (and we're talking

back-of-a-stamp complexity here) follows the attempts of insane, coke-hoovering copper Tchéky Karyo to nail famed supercriminal Dobermann (Cassel) and his gang of psychotic undesirables. And that really is it. But what the film lacks in narrative it more than makes up for with its strobing visuals and amphetamine editing. Tonque crushed against cheek. Kounen has set out to drag comic-book dynamics on to the big screen and he largely succeeds (we defy you not to wow at an outrageous split-screen seguence that smithereens images all over the screen and ends up looking like a fly's-eye view of the Dallas credits). Couple the brain-nailing visuals with a string of überviolence (the shotgun vasectomies and grenade decapitations may spin the guts of the weakerstomached), and the result is a hectic, head-spin of a movie.

Where Dobermann is much less successful is in the one-note performances - every single character is so singularly lacking in redeeming features that the only thing you're left rooting for is the bravado camerawork. Still, with its superb hyperkinetic visual acrobatics, France's answer to Natural Born Killers is well worth seeking out. The word "cult" (though not necessarily classic) spring to mind. **







Good Will Hunting ■ Buena Vista

■ This may be remembered as the film that launched Matt Damon and Ben Affleck into the Hollywood mainstream, but we shouldn't forget that the duo wrote the thing and came up with a script sharp enough to save the concept from being smothered by cheese.

Will Hunting's a reluctant genius, preferring to hang out with his huddies in Boston's Irish neighbourhood rather than solve mathematical codes for the government. Robin

Williams (in decent film shock) is the poly lecturer who helps Will find a true purpose in life Which turns out to be falling in love with Minnie Driver, and who can blame him? ★★★★

Up 'N' Under ■ Entertainment In Video

■ Even if you loved The Full Monty, you can't excuse it for giving carte blanche to this repeat-formula rubbish. The bloke from 2 Point 4 Children trains a struggling local rugby league team for a bet and they dia deep into their reserves of Northern, working-class grit to emerge as winners in the end.

It's also a comedy, not that you'd guess from the utterly unfunny script, but Gryff Rhys-Jones is usually a giveaway. As for Samantha Janus and Neil Morrissey, the workhouse is too good for them. *

Videos to Rent



Lost In Space

■ Entertainment In Video

■ Remaking ancient childrens TV series for a '90s cinema audience seems to be a hobby of producers with no new ideas but Lost in Space really should have been left to rot on UK Gold. The film is like a long episode of Red Dwarf devoid of jokes, a concept complemented by Matt Le Blanc who acts just like Joey from Friends but without the benefit of any decent lines. Off to populate a distant planet, the Robinsons' plans are disrupted by the evil Dr Smith (Gary Oldman) and they get, er, a bit lost. Nice explosions, though. ★★



Six Days Seven **Nights**

■ Touchstone

■ More proof that - Courtney Cox excepted - films touched by the Friends' stars turn to slush. David Schwimmer materialises briefly in Six Days Seven Nights, searching for his lost fiancée (Anne Heche), but - too late she's already been seduced by rough diamond Harrison Ford in a virtual repeat of his scenes with Kate Kapshaw in Indiana Jones and the Temple Of Doom. Except here the romancing takes a lot longer and there are no snake pits or quasi-pagan rituals

to liven things up.

Ford and Heche are mildly engaging and the tropical island setting is pleasant, but if your girlfriend decides to treat you to this, keep a crossword handy. *

Resurrection Man

■ Polygram

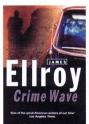
■ Loosely based on the life of Lovalist murderer Lenny Murphy, Resurrection Man is not one for a romantic evening. The screenplay was adapted by Eoin McNamee from his (by all accounts) better novel and certainly appears to have lost some of its coherence. The film is heavy with close-up violence, though it's very stylised which makes it more menacing any moral Resurrection Man might otherwise have had is well disquised. Sectarian violence in '70s Belfast may have been a fairly arbitrary business, but for anybody already confused by the complex history of the Northern Ireland troubles, this film doesn't help matters. ★★

Books & Music

Book of the Month



USA'S TOP CRIME WRITER ON THE QT AND VERY HUSH HUSH



Crime Wave

- Author: James Ellroy
- Publisher: Century
- Price: £15.99
- ISBN: 0-7126-79685

ven if you're not familiar with James Ellroy's brilliant LA quartet, you probably will know the plot of last year's classic cinema thriller LA Confidential. As stunning as that film was, it's impossible to do justice to Ellroy's frenetic prose without having felt its high-speed rhythm for yourself. Taking '50s cop/crim slang as his root, giving it a drunken intellectual slant and then finally twisting the language like a torturer, he somehow emerges having produced some classic lines of beat poetry.

Ellroy's no slouch when it comes to the plot, either. Hollywood Shakedown, one of two novellas included in this book, rattles past like gunfire, leaving you to mentally untie the knots at the end, until eventually you're left with a single, immaculate thread.

Ellroy sets Hollywood Shakedown in the 1950s because it's a time distant enough to indulge in a little fantasy, yet still recent enough to genuinely reflect

the seediness, corruption, perversion and desperation that we believe exists in the modern city. As with most of Ellroy's work, the narrator isn't much of a hero. Minor accordion-playing celebrity and impromptu underworld investigator Dick Contino is funny, sharp and lovably confused but he's also self-obsessed, violent and disgusting so it's difficult to empathise with him.

Instead Dick invites us to join him on a fast-paced stagger along LA's thin blue line between high and low, truth and lies and life and death. On the way we pass dope-dealing playboys, pimping cops, Hollywood snitches, gay pinko lawyers, psychopathic pianists and the ubiquitous, maniacal reporter from scandal mag Hush-Hush, for whom everything is on the QT. If at the end of it you want to wash your hands of the entire affair, fine. Find your own moral, Ellroy seems to be saying, but while you're with me you're going to Sam Richards have a blast. ★★★

Robot wars technical manual

- Author: Alan Baker
- Publisher: Boxtree ■ Price: £14.99
- ISBN: 0-7522-1361-X



Materialising on our Sunday lunchtime TV screens a year ago, Robot Wars' endearing naivety became perfect

hangover therapy. Not since Dr Heinz-Wolff's Great Egg Race had home-made technology been so fashionable, but Robot Wars gave garage geeks a new home. Add Jonathan Pierce's commentary and Phillipa Forrester's soothing presence to the equation, and you've got a show which regularly commands three million viewers.

This book leans heavily toward the technical aspects of building a bot. The mechanics are described in fairly approachable terms, so for anyone who's mocked the dismal, spluttering, attempts of last series' roboteers (who can forget the unworkable Psycho Sprout?), this is your chance to do better. Learn from the makers of the show's fearsome house robots and enjoy Phillipa in her alluring black outfit while you're at it.

Sadly, it appears that Alan Baker has bypassed the vein of nostalgic humour evident in the TV show with his use of workaday Sam Richards prose ***

Demon barber

- Author: Lynn Barber
- Publisher: Viking
- Price: £17.99
- ISBN: 0-670-85354-2



Even if her name isn't familiar, you'll have read Lynn Barber's interviews probably while lounging on the sofa after a hefty roast

dinner. She's the celeb interviewer for the Observer and before that the Independent On Sunday and

the Telegraph.

While thumbing this collection of tête-à-têtes, we were struck by how many of these pieces we had read before without noticing the byline. Within her thoroughlyresearched framework, Barber gives her subjects room to move, so they either shine or hang themselves. Jarvis Cocker and Eddie Izzard couldn't come across as anything other than decent blokes, while Alan Clark is wholly objectionable.

Occasionally, Barber does attempt to force an opinion, even when contradicted. Stephen Fry eloquently rejects therapy as an option and he's accused of being in denial. Damien Hirst doesn't want to find his real father and he's accused of denial, too. But forgive Barber's little obsessions and this is a true insight into '90s celeb life. ** * Sam Richards

Vinnie - The **Autobiography**

- Author: Vinnie Jones
- Publisher: **Headline**
- Price: £16.99
- ISBN: 0-7472-2122-7



Vinnie Jones the hod carrier turned footie hardman, Founder member of the Wimbledon "Crazy Gang". Welsh captain.

QPR coach. And Big Chris the debt collector from UK gangster flick Lock Stock And Two Smoking Barrels. It's been a strange ride for the Hertfordshire lad, and time for an autobiography, but does it tell us anything we hadn't guessed?

Not really. The impression is that Vinnie is a decent chap, a better footballer than often given credit for, he's impetuous and he craves attention, a trait that often manifests itself in violence. Vinnie is regretful of his outbursts on and off the pitch, but also realises that it's what's made him interesting. Threatening Leeds manager Howard Wilkinson with a shotgun, grabbing Gazza's bollocks and getting booked after five seconds of a game are all things that pro footballers don't do. In a world of Shearers, he is a "character", but he's nothing too complicated. If you're looking for psychological pointers, the book begins with a tale of junior Vinnie nicking £20 from his Dad - hardly scarred-forlife stuff. *** Sam Richards

Kingdom Gone

- Author: Frank Lean
- Publisher: **Heinemann**
- Price: £15.99
- ISBN: 0-434-00450-2



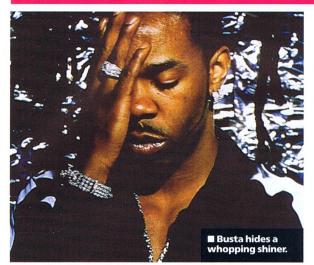
Fred Travis, an entrepreneur with links to the growing Children of Light cult is found stone dead clutching the card of ex-private eye David

Cunane. Released by the police, Cunane is approached by Aldous Arkwright, spiritual guru of the Children, who persuades him to visit the cult premises. Here Cunane meets cultist Melanie who pleads for help to escape. Cunane rescues Melanie, making a mess of one of the cult's heavy mob in the process. Meanwhile Clint, Cunane's nightclub-owning friend's giant brother is accused of the murder, and suspicions of evidence tampering and an unlikely friendship between Clint and local pop impresario Melville Monckton are rife.

As you can tell from this summary, Lean's involving story is breathless and characters are introduced with exhilarating rapidity. Persevere, and all leads can be traced back ingeniously to Fred Travis' death. Witty, fast and thoroughly gripping, Kingdom Gone is a tremendous example of the modern British thriller.

Rich Pellev ****

VUSIC Edited by Sam Richards



Boom Boom Satellites Out Loud

■ Label: R&S



Sometimes all that's needed to make the world happy again is an

album of brilliant, provocative Japanese driving techno, courtesy of the Boom Boom Satellites. When we say driving, we mean driving, as the lads are trussed up in rally gear behind the wheel of an electric blue Renault Alpine on the album's cover (the car, by the way, is itself a design masterpiece and should be appropriated by Sony for Gran Turismo 2 if the company has any sense).

Gorgeous opener "Missing Note" is an inconspicuous ignition, taking seven minutes to swell to full size, like a magic paper flower when added to water. After that. there's no stopping the Boom Boom boys, "Batter the Jam No 3" chews up pieces of flute and spits them out all over the road. Top speed is reached on "Oneness", a song that proves the boys can handle a guitar as well as they do a gearstick - it's as outrageously noisy as putting your ear to a roaring exhaust. If not the drive of your life, Out Loud is at least an exhilarating round-the-block spin in a snazzy new motor.

Sam Richards ****

Busta Rhymes Extinction Level Event ■ Label: East West



You'll know him as the dreadlocked headcase responsible for sampling the Knight

Rider theme on "Turn It Up/Fire It Up": the man who claimed he had us (woooh-haaah) all in check

Now, though, like every other rapper in the known universe, Busta has recorded his premillennium opus, and while the album opens with a hilarious overthe-top armageddon prophecy, he soon forgets any notion of a central theme and heads off on several conflicting tangents, often all at once, and always at 278mph.

Busta may not inhabit the same arena as the slightly more cerebral Wu-Tang and Rawkus posses, but he's no Puff Daddy either - his contemporary style is always influenced by the old-skool "block party" mentality from which he emerged. However menacing those string loops become, though, Busta can't help but entertain. His showstopper is "This Means War!!", a re-hash of Black Sabbath's "Iron Man". starring the vocal talents of Ozzy Sam Richards himself. ***

ocked on Volume 3 Mixed by Ramsey and Fen **■** Label: Virgin Records



We live in a world where crossovers and fusions are making it increasingly difficult to

categorise music; a world where

<u> Millennium</u>

styles overlap and mix CDs are bastions of eclecticism. Stubbornly bucking this trend, Locked On Volume 3 brings together 18 barely-distinguishable "speed garage" cuts. Few will have cared much about the rapid ascent and subsequent decline of this highly London-centric dance scene but Locked On Volume 3s collection of bland, tuneless predictability provides little excuse for fond recollection. A woman sings, a keyboard riff bores on, something goes "beep" somewhere else and before you've noticed, the CD's over. On this evidence, "speed garage" will not be recognised as one of the decade's defining movements. * Rich Pellev

Snowpony The Slow Motion World of Snowpony

■ Label: Radioactive



Katherine Gifford and Debbie Googe, the core members of Snowpony,

paid their experimental dues in the ranks of Stereolab, My Bloody Valentine and Moonshake.

Musically, Snowpony has pulled away from the shadows of its former employers, but the urge to tinker with existing forms of music remain intact. All Snowpony songs are based around loops of unusual samples - anything from classical strings to soulful brass to angular guitar - which are then moulded into an organic whole. The resulting creations are often strangely beautiful, although titles such as "3 Can Keep A Secret (When 2 Are Dead)", suggest the group would rather scare the pants off you than comfort you in your hour of need.

The twin vocals tracing across baroque melodies are reminiscent of the Throwing Muses, although Snowpony could do with some of the Muses band's sporadic bursts of unbridled celebration. Music in Slow Motion is regularly gorgeous, but it's also occasionally Sam Richards drab. ***

Music that's making the Arcade office a better

Bonnie Prince Billy

Jukebox

I See A Darkness (LP) ■ Label: Domino

■ Country geezer with ginger 'tache, otherwise known as Palace, Push or just plain Will Oldham, makes strange, but rather wonderful record. Superb for long evenings.

Ed Rush & Optical Wormhole (LP)

■ Label: Virus

■ The none-more-black junglists trip nimbly along a razor-sharp funk edge. Ten cups of black coffee on an

absinthe hangover and the inside of your head might sound like this.

place to be

Four Tet

Misnomer (12-inch)
■ Label: Output

■ Queasy flute-strings-'n'-beat that draws you into its welcoming home and force-feeds you soufflé.

Music Instructor Featuring Abe Get Freaky (single)

■ Label: Fuel ■ Mad Germans make '80s-style techno/rap

record featuring vocals by little green Abe Mudoken of *Oddworld* fame. Sounds like Snap's "The Power" crossed with "Rock Me Amadeus". Not available in the UK, thankfully.

Megasoft Office (LP) ■ Label: F Communications

■ Marvellous ambient jazz-tinged compilation, specifically designed for calming tense office situations. Like Arcade's deadlines never existed

Album of the Month



KINGS OF THE REMIX GET REM



Coldcut Let Us Replay ■ Label: Ninja Tune

n the '80s Coldcut pioneered sampling technology, invented the cut-'n'-mix record and launched the careers of Yazz and Lisa Stansfield among others. In the '90s it set up one of England's coolest record labels (Ninja Tune) and made the best DJ mix compilation ever (Journeys by DJ Volume One). More recently, it has been creating its own software, including ReCycle, which chews up your tracks and randomly remixes them. Let Us Replay is a frolicsome reiteration of all Coldcut's previous achievements, taking in a variety of remixes, collaborations and live tracks; the deliberate incoherence and wide scope of this LP represents the duo more accurately than a straightforward album release could ever do.

The array of collaborators pretty much summarises Coldcut's oblique, yet infectious, take on modern music. Carl Craig propels "Rubaiyat" down an ultra-modern highway, while the Arcade office favourite Cornelius generates some magical air currents beneath the wings of "Atomic Moog 2000". Unknown vocalists and classical string players rub shoulders with rave veterans Shut Up And Dance. "This is a journey into sound" reverberates for the 700th time, but is tempered by the towering humour of "Last Night a Cliché Saved My Life", impressively featuring both Coldcut's mentor, Grandmaster Flash, and its protégé, DJ Food.

If you don't like the way Coldcut cuts it, or think you could do better yourself, a second CD included in the pack features an extensive demo of its new audio sequencing toy V-Jamm, which enables you to rearrange a raft of Coldcut tracks to your heart's content. Coldcut is still providing more width than your average groundbreaking electro-pop-hip-hop sampladelic postmodern Sam Richards



■ Jon Moore: Coldcut's musical maestro



■ Matt Black: Coldcut's other musical maestro.

es & Gadgets



THE SLOWEST, STEALTHIEST GRAND PRIX GAME EVER

Formula Dé

■ Publisher: **Euro Games** ■ Available from: **Esdevium Games on 01252 326116**

■ Price: £29.95 ■ Release date: on sale

now ■ Players: 2-10

deogame racers are determined in their pursuit of speed, mainly for the adrenaline rush and the excitement. Board games can't provide the same level of cheap thrills, however, which is why Formula Dé opts for a different approach. You may think that a Grand Prix board game misses the point entirely, but in Formula Dé you must rely on a combination of tactics and dice gambling in order to leave your opponents choking on carbon monoxide.

Although there are options for increasingly complex rules, the basic concept is simple. Your car has six gears,

each with its own die - the higher the gear, the higher the number you can roll and the more spaces you can move. Scooting round in sixth is not an option, though, because at each corner you're required to make a specified number of stops and overshooting loses you tyre and brake points. This is a risk that you must take to steal a march on your fellow drivers, but once all your tyre and break points are exhausted, you'll spin horribly into the sand.

Two-player racing is largely a risk management contest, but the more cars there are on a three-lane track, the more you'll need to rely on tactical skill. Racing is a tense affair and each circuit can take up to an hour.

Even if you consider the spectacle of overpaid chisel-jaws driving around the same course 72 times fatiguing, you can still enjoy Formula Dé as it has little to do with real Formula One. Rolling dice to move around the board? It's Ludo for the Gran Turismo generation. ★★★

Sam Richards

REAT THE CLOCK IT'S THE DECIMAL TIME ZONE **Swatch Biel Mean** Time Watch

You may never have to adjust your watch again.

■ Available from: **Swatch**

■ Price: £50 ■ Release date: February

he Berlin Wall is yesterday's rubble, Europe will soon have a single currency and the Internet means the other side of the world is only a mouse-click away. Time is the final frontier and Swatch is doing the best to break through it. Here is its new watch, running not by hours and minutes, but by "beats", of which there are 1,000 in a day; each the equivalent of one minute, 26.4 seconds.

Decimalisation gone mad? Well, yes, but the whole point of the Biel Mean Time Watch (named after its crazed inventor, we

suppose), is that it eradicates those pesky international time zones. With the Biel Meridian set in Switzerland in October, the entire world is already ticking to the same beat clock, whatever the time of day. Those round-theworld trips, once a frenzy of watch recalibrationaction, will now pass by calmly and peacefully. Check out the Swatch Web site at http:// www.swatch.com/. As well as being able to see the watches here, you can also download Beat Desktop Clocks. See you in

the pub at 782 beats then. Mine's

Chas Davies

Silvernote notebook PC

Available from: Pico on 01483 402111

- Price: £1,937
- Release date: on sale now
- There was a time when a notebook computer was an

object of wonder. Whip one out of your bag and you would be instantly surrounded by people going "ooh" and "aah". Now, though, every other person on the 8.15am Bristol-to-London express has one, and they've lost the wow factor.

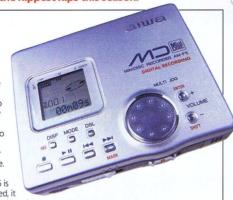
Unless, that is, your notebook is as sleek as Pico's new Silvernote. But the Pico doesn't appeal on looks alone: inside that case is a 300MHz Pentium II chip, 64Mb of SDRAM and a 4.2Gb hard drive, which means it's probably more powerful than the PC on your office desk. With builtin floppy and CD-ROM drives, USB and FireWire ports and a 13.1-inch thin film transistor display, we're looking at a machine that'll

handle just about any computing task you care to throw at it. On the downside, it's pretty large compared to other notebooks on the market (being nearly two inches thick), and its battery life isn't great. But two hours of "oohs" and "aahs" from your fellow commuters ain't bad...*** Rich Pelley

make near-CD quality recordings? 73 magazine's Russell Deeks rounds up the portable and nearly portable – recorders gracing the hippest hips this season.

AM-F5

- Available from: Aiwa on 0990 902902
- Price: £230
- Release date: on sale now
- Looking much more like a traditional personal stereo than the other models featured here, the Aiwa's also the cheapest. This isn't reflected too much in the sound quality, though, which is nice. Where the AM-F5 seems to have suffered somewhat is on the design front; simplicity has its merits, sure, but when you're dealing with new technology, surely you want something a bit more flash to wave about? What's more, the controls aren't as clearly labelled, and the display isn't as user-friendly, as the other models we've looked at, making it more fiddly to operate. The remote's also disappointing - it's just a strip of black plastic with a couple of buttons. But to be fair, the AM-F5 is the only model here that comes with a stereo mic supplied, it weighs as little as the Sharp and the Kenwood and (with three AA batteries attached) offers continuous play of up to 26 hours. **



KENWOOD

WIDE BIT STREAM

MZ-R5ST

- Available from: Sony on 0990 111999
- Price: £500
- Release date: on sale now
- Now this is a fine idea. You see, while machines like the Sharp and Kenwood personal recorders make recording tracks, naming and editing them pretty straightforward, they just can't compare with a separate MiniDisc player for ease of use. So Sony has come up with a two-piece solution. For listening to MiniDiscs, you've got a personal player; then, when you want to make recordings, just slot it into its docking station and you're working with fully formed hi-fi separates.

The only drawbacks with this idea are that your MD recorder doesn't then double as a dictaphone (as the other personal recorders on test here can), and of course if you're wanting to take it round your mate's to record his Oasis CD it's that much more bulky – but then recording other people's albums is against the law, anyway. The MZ-R5ST sounds fantastic, and in personal player mode you're looking at a mere 185 grammes to lug around. We don't know about the battery life, but it should be reasonable, since the MZ player uses both a rechargeable and two AA batteries ***

A OUR CHOICE

DMC-J7R

- Available from: Kenwood on 01923 816444
- Price: £250
- Release date: on sale now
- Easily the most stylish model we've tested, coming as it does in a casing that's a lovely rich blue. There are just enough buttons on the front to make recording and naming tracks relatively simple, but not enough to make the fascia look cluttered. As with the Sharp model, there's a rather stylish remote complete with backlight, although for some reason this hasn't been made to match the unit itself. There are separate optical/line and mic inputs, though there's no optical cable supplied (unlike with the Sharp MD-MS722H). And why all the Sharp comparisons? Because the machine inside

is exactly the same – so you get the same sound quality and same
Bass Boost. The DMC-I7R weighs about the same, too, although for some reason the Kenwood will give you just 14.5 hours of play – and that's using the rechargeable battery plus two AAs, as opposed to the Sharp's one. Still, it looks better, though. *****



MD-MS722H

- Available from: Sharp on 0800 262958
- Price: £280
- Release date: on sale now

■ The key thing to consider, if you are thinking of buying the Sharp MD-MS722H, is can you live with its looks? It's certainly striking, but while some folk around here thought that it looked impressively techie, others reckoned it was merely clunky. On the

plus side, though, all those buttons and the big jog dial do make recording, editing and naming tracks a doddle. For playback, it also has a nice G-Shock-style backlit remote, complete with a "hold" function to stop you accidentally knocking it and pumping up the volume to an ear-splitting level (or whatever). The sound's pretty darn good, although it can get a bit stroppy at high volume, but you do get a three-level Bass Boost function if you're looking for a bit more kick. At 220 grammes and with an optimum battery life of

16 hours continuous play (using the supplied rechargeable battery, plus a single AA in the bolt-on battery pack), it's certainly worth a look. ***

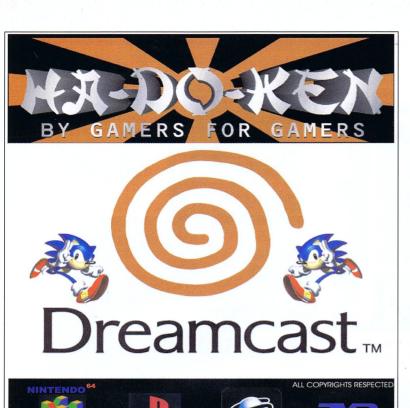
MDC-3100F

- Available from: **Sanyo on 01923 246363**
- Price: £300
- Release date: on sale now
- This one's a bit different it's not a personal MD recorder at all, but a fully-fledged ghetto blaster incorporating CD, tuner, MiniDisc and cassette. Quite why you'd want both cassette and MD in one unit isn't clear – presumably Sanyo reckons people are really quite attached to their old Sasha mix tapes and won't want to give them up.

 There's plenty of scope for including lots of buttons

without overcrowding, so in terms of ease of use it's excellent. You also get a proper, grown-up remote control. Soundwise, there has to be a payoff for getting all these formats in one box: we've heard better, but for a £300 boombox we've heard a lot worse as well. You also get four DSP modes and a four-level Bass Xpander. It's mains-only, so its portability is limited, especially as it weighs in at 5.9kg. ★★★

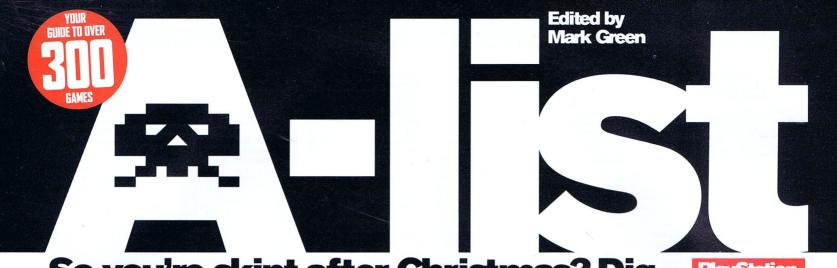












So you're skint after Christmas? Dig out those coppers granny dropped down the sofa and head to the sales with the A-list. It's your exhaustive guide to every (and we mean every) game currently on sale.

What to look for in the comprehensive A-list this issue:

153 Ice ice baby

The top five ice hockey games reviewed and rated.

154 How Host my friends

The sad, sad story of how Mark Green lost his mates all because of Gauntlet II.

156 Wave Race 64

Sink or swim – long-term test of the N64 splash-fest.

158 Like the plague...

Games to avoid - this month a look at the unfortunate Montezuma's Return.

151 PlayStation games

Over 130 games reviewed for Britain's top console.

155 PC games

More than 100 of the latest PC releases rated.

158 Nintendo 64 games

Some of our favourites.

159 Game Boy games

For gaming on the move.

Star ratings

- Simply the best. A game you really should try.
- Excellent, Definitely worth your money. Good stuff. Not exactly a world beater,
- but fine within its genre Strictly average. We say: don't buy it.
- Really bad news. Avoid at all costs.















COIN

ELF HEALT





PlayStation



Actua Golf 3 Sports 🛮 1-4 players 🛍 Gremlin Interactive Time for tee Tee up with eight courses, a variety of one-player and multi-player tournaments, and some lovingly crafted scenery. Actua Golf 3 doesn't offer anything new over other golf games, but the slickness of it all, and Peter Allis' wonderful commentary, brings it in well under

Actua Ice Hockey ■ Sports ■ 1-2 players ■ Gremlin Interactive

Minority sport for psychopaths Surprisingly slow and unresponsive, but Actua Ice Hockey's saving grace is its easyto-pick-up control system. You'll have players bouncing off the ice in no time. ***

Or try: Wayne Gretsky's **Hockey** ■ 1-2 players ■ GT Interactive ■ 3D graphics, but strictly 1D long-term appeal. ★★★ (Turn to page 153 for more about out favourite ice hockey games)

Actua Soccer 3 ■ Sports ■ 1-2 players ■ Gremlin Pigs bladder kick-athon Pleasingly difficult and wonderfully fluid, Actua Soccer 3 produces passes, long balls and bicycle kicks that flow together like a well-oiled Brazilian back-four. Only let down by the lack of special moves and occasionally ropey animation, but otherwise a solid – if largely unimproved –

Alien Trilogy ■ First-person shooter ■ 1-4 players ■ Acclaim **Entertainment** ■ Platinum

sequel. ***

Doom-style antics with Ripley and "friends" General monotony and aliens that look like they might fall apart at any minute (but are actually far too difficult to kill) make this a lot less scary than the movies. **

All Star Tennis '99 ■ Sports ■ 1-4 players ■ Ubisoft Ball, net, bat thing,

and all the rest Not Smash Court-style comedy tennis, but a more serious recreation of Henman's hobby. It's nippy, and there's a decent range of shots, but the camera obscures things and helps to make the one-player game frustratingly difficult. Stick to the friend-thrashing multi-player and the brilliantly inventive "bomb tennis" sub-game, and you'll be

happy you came. ★★★

Or try: Tennis Arena ■ 1-2 players ■ Ubisoft ■ Comedy tennis antics. **



lavStation



Alundra RPG 🖪 1 player 🖩 Psygnosis **Old-style RPG** An absorbing plot and an enticing arcadey feel which harks back to the days of Zelda.

With gorgeous graphics and addictive gameplay, the emphasis as much about moving and jumping as on solving the difficult but logical puzzles. ***

Or try: Azure Dreams ■ 1 player ■ Konami ■ Conque the ever-changing tower. **

Apocalypse noot-'em-up n 1 player n **Activision Bruce Willis and** some guns Demi's hubby doesn't feature much except in the FMV, unless you catch sight of his face hilariously pasted on to a polygon body. But this is still a big, bold, futuristic shooter with a decent learning curve and not too many puzzles to interrupt the action. The controls and camera make things tricky, but otherwise it's solid, violent fun. **

Arcade's Greatest Hits: The Atari Collection 2 ■ Retro ■ 1-4 players ■ Midway Nothing to do with us, fortunately Millipede,

Road Blasters, Crystal Castles, Marble Madness, Paperboy and Gauntlet, in increasing order of importance. Unfortunately, none of them – not even the eminent Gauntlet – holds up well in an age when you need massive breasts to become a gaming legend. ★★★ Or try: Namco Museum 1

■ 1 player ■ Namco ■ Galaga, Pac-Man, Pole Position, Rally X. ★★★ Assault

■ Shooter ■ 1-2 players ■ Telstar Old-school blasting action Take a chunk of Contra on the SNES, add 3D, plentiful powerups and intuitive controls, and this slice of arcade action is worth its name. Ruined by slow-down, and a fluctuating difficulty level. **

Asteroids n Shooter n 1-2 players ■ Svrox Retro rock-blasting returns Shoot, fly, shoot some

more – the original concept hasn't changed, but a dollop of powerups bosses and eve-torturing effects has brought it up to date for '90s kids. It's still (repetitive) fun, but as a 20-year-old game with few actual improvements, it's also showing its age. **

B-Movie Shooter ■ 1 player ■ GT Interactive '50s-style shootthe-aliens game An amusing shoot-'em-up with a missionbased slant and cartoony graphics. The ability to improve your ship over time is great, but the controls and levels conspire to make life far too much of a hassle. ***



Battle Arena Toshinden 3 ■ Fighting ■ 1-2 players ■ SCEE The crazy old men return A high for the Toshinden series, though still eclipsed by the shadow of Tekken. Improvements over the original are obvious, but it's limited in every respect when compared to the Big T. ★★★

Or try: Battle Arena Toshinden 2 = 1-2 players = SCEE More of the same. ★★★

Bloody Roar ■ Fighting ■ 1-2 players
■ Hudson 3D beat-'em-up vith added animal magic Limited moves, but what you get is very quick and smooth Set apart by both its style and the ability of its fighters to change into various animal forms – nothing new if you remember TV's Manimal. ** Or try: Cardinal Syn ■ 1-2

players ■ SCEE ■ Beat-'em-up

that dispenses with fair play. ★★

Bomberman World ■ Puzzler ■ 1-5 players ■ Sony/Hudsonsoft Bomber bloke's debut on PSX When Hudsonsoft suggested that it was going to turn the 2D Bomberman mazes isometric, the whole world screamed. The conversion's here. and in one-player mode offers endless tedious mazes that only differ in speed and boss size, with nothing new offered over the first Bomberman. Inevitably, however, the multi-player is ridiculously

Breath of Fire III RPG 1 1 player Virgin Interactive Entertainment Turn-based isometric role **player** A genuinely interesting story-line (all about combining genes to give dragons special powers) and a host of characters you'll care about, combine to make this genuinely involving, while the rotatable isometric perspective is neat. The pace gets a bit ploddy at times, though. ***

Brian Lara Cricket Sports ■ 1-4 players ■ Codemasters Leather-on willow simulator This cricket sim is so realistic that you know it's your fault when you're losing. It's painfully hard half the time (literally - batting is much easier than bowling), but this is surprisingly playable and very well-crafted, with the commentary and graphics in particular standing out. ***



Bushido Blade ■ Fighting ■ 1-2 players■ Sony Pugilism for purists

Using trad weapons, and with characters who drop to the floor after just one hit, this is the beat-'em-up for purists. After other, more cartoony scrappers it takes time to adjust to fighting this way (and even longer to become truly proficient) but there are rewards a plenty if you persevere. ***

Bust-A-Move 4 ■ Puzzler ■ 1-2 players ■ Taito Bubble-bursting

brilliance In this puzzle, the aim is to match coloured bubbles, and it's as easy to pick up and painfully addictive to play as in previous versions, especially in two-player. The new bubble-link feature makes for faster and more frenetic play, and the story mode levels bring in some novel additions, too. Don't bother if you already own a

version, though. ★★★★★
Or try: Bust-A-Move 2 ■ 1-2 players ■ Acclaim ■ You'll forget sleep exists! ***

Chessmaster 3D ■ Puzzier ■ 1 player ■ Mindscape If you want PSX chess, it's your only option More expensive than a real chess board, but cheaper than Big Blue, this isn't the best-presented game in the world. Still, it's laden with

skill levels and options. **

Circuit Breakers ■ Racing ■ 1-4 players ■ Mindscape Mario Kart + Micro Machines = not quite as good as either The varied courses and a decent helping of speed add up to a fine comedy racer. The multi-player game wil have you waking the neighbours with boisterous swearing, such is the range of weapons and tactics

Colin McRae Rally Racing 1-2 players ■ Codemasters Only his Mum's ever heard of him A departure from the usual racing game, with time and damage you only opponents. The variety of terrain and responsive controls give a real feeling of driving feedback it's gratifying to see a racer that can compete with GT. ***

Colony Wars: Vengeance Space shooter ■ 1 player ■ **Psygnosis Epic space battles** in space Looking absolutely gorgeous, this great seguel takes your spaceship through a variety of missions and all-out explosive battles. It's off-puttingly methodical, but it provides enough realistic space combat to make Star Wars fans wet their pants. *** Or try: Blast Radius ■ 1-2 players Psygnosis Space mission flying antics. **



Command & Conquer Strategy ■ 1 player ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment ■ Platinum The original real-time war simulator Manage all your resources and send men to their deaths. It's extremely popular, solid and involving, but it's starting to date. The design of the levels and speed of the action make it a bit of a bargain. ★★★★
Or try: Z ■ 1 player ■ SCEE

Robotic action strategy. **

Command & Conquer: Red Alert ■ Strategy ■ 1-2 players ■ Virgin Interactive

Entertainment And again The strategy sequel with improved graphics and a great link-up game. If you don't come to the massacre with a mouse, then knock a star off the score but otherwise this is a very fine game with a massive number of missions. ****

Or try: Command & Conquer: Retaliation ■ 1-2 players Virgin Interactive Entertainment ■ An update of Red Alert. **

Constructor ■ Strategy ■ 1 player ■ Acclaim <mark>Build an urban</mark>

empire Feels like Sim City, but where else do you get the chance to control a sweaty builder rather than the city mayor? Pointing and clicking to build up houses while keeping your tenants happy is comfortingly challenging, and there's also a host of interesting enemies, rivals and mad hippietypes to contend with. Complex comprehensive and cool. **

Cool Boarders 3

Racing ■ 1-2 player ■ SCEE Snowboarding fun all over again With a hefty collection of tracks, characters and boards, and looking a good deal better than previous episodes, PlayStation snow-fans should get their shivery little hands on this one Smooth controls make careering down the trick and speed courses a breeze and it's only let down by the iffy collision detection *** Or try: Cool Boarders 2 ■ 1-2 players ■ SCEE ■ Snowboarding for the masses. ***

Crash Bandicoot 2 ■ Platformer ■ 1 player■ SCEE Pseudo-3D antics again Far better looking than the original, and with slightly more to do, but the level formats haven't been changed significantly and it's quick to finish *** Or try: Croc ■ 1 player ■ Fox Interactive I Lacklustre 3D crocodile adventure. ★★

Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped

■ Platformer ■ 1 player ■ SCEE More maniacal

marsupial merriment Crash has gained some slow dinosaur-riding sections and a girlfriend who he lets you control. but otherwise this third version is just another crazed 3D race in and out of the screen. This time though, Crash 3 has become the PSX's best platformer, thanks to the breathtakingly atmospheric worlds, and a longevity ensured by the host of time-challenges, bosses and secret levels ***

Or try: Crash Bandicoot ■ 1 player ■ SCEE ■ Platinum ■ The first round of 3D antics with a mad marsupial. **

Crime Killer ■ Racing/shooter ■ 1-2 players ■ Interplay Fuzz of the future A mission-based shooter. Hunt "Burning Epoch" terrorists using the armed bikes cars and wings at your disposal It's fast, with good graphics, but constantly ranges in difficulty. And when it's difficult it's very difficult. The two-player option seems a bit tagged on, too. ★★★ Or try: Felony 11-79 1 1 player ■ ASCII ■ Short-term driving

Dead Ball Zone Sports ■ 1-2 players ■ GT Interactive Rugby for space-age sadists An attempt to update the sadly ageing classic Speedball for today's violenceeager audience. There's plenty of blood and vomit, but the stupidly fast play, a ball that's too difficult to see and the clueless, drunken computer players mean it never

mayhem. **

Dead or Alive ■ Fighting ■ 1-2 players
■ SCEE Slick beat-'em-up

flows properly. ★★★

Barren-looking but with guick-asyou-like visuals, this makes for a slick deviation from Tekken-style fighting through its clever use of counter-attacks, and an emphasis on chucking people up in the air. Sadly, though, Dead or Alive is only really distinguished from the horde by its tragic "bouncing breasts"



Destruction Derby ■ Racing ■ 1-2 players ■ Psygnosis ■ Platinum Early PlayStation racing Buy this and you'll be staring into space wondering why for several hours each day. The small, poorly designed tracks mean there's very little fun to be had. Head straight to the sequel. **

Destruction Derby 2 ■ Racing ■ 1 player ■ Psygnosis ■ Platinum

Smashing sequel Making good on almost all of the faults of the original, this sequel is incredibly fast, includes varied well-designed tracks, and offers more crashes than your average PC. And it's a mere 20 guid too ****

Diablo ■ RPG ■ 1-2 players ■ Electronic Arts Goblins and sorcerers in old-skool role-playing Far too simple, with little to do except wander around medieval environments, engaging in both unimaginative fighting and chatting. The controls and graphics haven't had an easy transition to the PlayStation, but the innovative co-operative two-player game and random map generator pull it from the brink. ★★



Die Hard Trilogy ■ Shooter/racing ■ 1 player ■ Electronic Arts ■ Platinum

Three games in one Excellent alue for money, this triple bundle includes a Tomb Raider-style shooter, a *Time Crisis*-alike and a driving game. Obvious effort has been expended on each part, both in the graphics and gameplay, and ree are difficult enough to last you for ages. ***



Doom ■ First-person shooter ■ 1-2 players ■ GT Interactive

In the beginning... Superb conversion of id's breakthrough first-person shooter. The minor fact that the graphics are already years out of date merely enables the excellent level design and the simplistic gameplay to shine. Every home should have one... * * * *

Or try: Star Wars: Dark Forces ■ 1 player ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment Shoot-'em-up with Stormtroopers. ★★★

Duke Nukem ■ First-person shooter■ 1 player ■ GT Interactive outrageously bad-taste firstperson shooter, starring a crazed psychopath, numerous topless

lovelies and several toilets. Strong gameplay, and with levels that are ingeniously designed around real-life locales, but it's all looking a bit dated already. ★★★ Or try: One ■ 1 player ■ ASC

Games Slick graphics, big guns.

Everybody's Golf ■ Sports ■ 1-4 players ■ SCEE Cartoon-style stickand-ball antics Simplistic looks but complex gameplay, with an arcade slant that injects more speed and a host of secrets to earn, Buy Actua Golf if you want realistic simulation, but this one's great if you don't take your golf

too seriously. *** Or try: Konami Open Golf ■ 1-2 players■ Konami■ One-course arcade stuff. ★★★

FIFA 99 ■ Sports ■ 1-2 players ■ EA Sports Long-running official

footy update It's got the license, it's packed with visual frills and it's nippier than a Liverpudlian striker. But while FIFA is simplistic enough to cater for the lightweights who find ISS Pro too demanding, scoring multiple goals is far too easy and there's the feeling that the programmers just don't care about football. ***



Final Fantasy VII ■ RPG ■ 1 player ■ SCEE 150 hours of truly epic

adventure Quite incredible cutscenes that mix seamlessly with the moving characters, exciting conflicts and a story-line that will have you emotionally involved throughout. The random battles and linear nature are minor faults but otherwise, it's a near-perfect adventure experience

Formula 1'98 Racing ■ 1-4 players ■ Psygnosis Purportedly accurate driving sim In an astonishing climb-down from the previous two incarnations, this is saddled with a top of pop-up inadequate views that prevent you from seeing far enough ahead and horrendous handling. The wealth of options and feeling of realism save it a little, but not enough. ★★
Or try: Formula 1'97 ■ 1-2 players ■ Psygnosis ■ Vroooom...

Forsaken ■ First-person shooter ■ 1-2 players ■ Acclaim **Entertainment Blast bikers** away Battle to the death in a mad scramble to gain the last resources of a condemned planet in this very tough tunnel-based hovercraft shoot-'em-up. The controls are tricky, but the sheer look of the thing will keep you persevering. ***

Or try: Tunnel B1 ■ 1 player ■ Ocean ■ Fast and claustrophobic. ***

G Darius ■ Shooter ■ 1-2 players
■ THQ Updated 2D shooter

15 levels, arranged so that you have a choice of route, don't make this game any easier, or any less monotonous. It's action-packed for shooting fans and the great "attack enemy ship to use their weapons" concept is nifty, but with so many enemies on screen you risk brain bleed. ★★★



G-Police ■ Shooter ■ 1 player

■ Psygnosis You are the law Mission-based shoot-'em-up, with plenty of variety and a series of interesting world layouts set in domed cities. Initially as easy to control as a three-year-old in a supermarket, but stick with it and a compulsive experience emerges, especially as it manages to slip



some strategy elements in while you're not looking. ***

Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko

■ Platformer ■ 1 player ■ Take 2 Interactive Lizard.

Mario's crown but Gex doesn't feel as free-roaming as the Big M. You do have 125 moves at your disposal, and the level design is almost as good as Nintendo's. It's a barrel of fun, but thanks to its appaling sense of humour not a barrel of laughs. **

Grand Theft Auto ■ Joy riding ■ 1 player **■** BMG Interactive

Controversy ahoy! The shoddy graphics and poor speed affect the central appeal of kicking in civilians and driving whatever vehicle you care to purloin but this is still an involving crim-'em-up. Just don't look at the graphics on the PC version, unless you want to be made green with envy. **

Gran Turismo ■ Racing ■ 1-2 players ■ SCEE Probably the best racing game in the world

Take one measure of outrageously good graphics and near-perfect handling, throw in immediacy of play and limitless levels of depth, add a dash of replay mode, and you've a pleasure pie that can't be missed. A masterpiece. ***

Heart of Darkness ■ Platformer ■ 1 player

■ Ocean Long-awaited 2D ure Four years out of date, this Gallic epic about a boy and his dog is frustratingly difficult, despite hints thrown up at various points, and descends into trial-anderror on too many occasions. It's saved by it's size, though. **

Or try: Hercules 1 player ■ Electronic Arts ■ SNES-style cartoon platformer. ★★★

Invasion ■ Shoot-'em-up n 1 player ■ Microids Back-to-basics oter Although the mission-

hased structure makes things a hit more exciting, this is the most runof-the-mill shooter ever to grace our grey friend. The levels are nice, the weapons are okay, the baddies are fine, but it's all very forgettable A real John Major of a game. **



ISS Pro '98 Sports ■ 1-4 players ■ Konami The best football

sticks one up its desperate licencetoting rivals by beautifully honing its original killer title Playability is smoother, tactics more subtle, graphics more well realised, goalscoring more rewarding and that through-pass will send shivers of ecstasy along your spine. Plus Tony Gubba's commentary is oddly

Or try: Kick Off '97 ■ 1-2 players ■ Maxis ■ There's no prize for second place. **

Knockout Kings ■ Sports ■ 1-2 players ■ EA Sports Boxing very cle

Very much a simulation of punchuppery, with a powerbar system to make sure you don't just stab the "hit" button until your opponent falls. There's plenty of modes, a create-a-player section and you can meet a virtual Muhammed Ali at the end Cripes! ***



Kula World ■ Puzzler ■ 1-2 players ■ SCEE Indecently addictive puzzler Ball-rolling-impossibly-ona-floating-maze game. Hard to get into, but once you're sucked in you'll be hooked, mostly because of the well-designed controls and head-scratching levels *** Or try: Kurushi
1-2 players ■ SCEE ■ Mind-twisting block-

shifting. ★★★ Lemmings Compilation

Puzzle 1 player ■ Psygnosis Save multiple

gets from hideous death The latest instalment of this longrunning series steps back to the roots of the crazy little 2D suicidal maniacs. Click on little men to help them avoid traps and get safely home, scream at the screen in frustration and find it impossible to stop playing. Still, it's all looking very dated ***

Libero Grande ■ Sports ■ 1-2 players ■ Namco Football starring the individual Commendably original vou control just one plaver throughout the entire match – but, sadly Libero is glitchy and tedious.

Your star player is lucky if he finds the ball at his feet twice per half. while the rest of your team are content to run blindly toward the goal and try to barge past the keeper. Nice try, but no cigar. **

Loaded

■ Shooter ■ 1 player **■** Gremlin Interactive

■ Platinum Mass murde quest Starring a whole series of unhinged nutters, this blokebloodbath has no pretensions about being anything other than mindless shooting, complete with gore-splattering explosions and weapons that would make Arnie blush. It's very difficult to see what's going on and the sheer number of similar mazes will have vou very bored, very quickly, ★★

Megaman Legends RPG ■ 1 player ■ Virgin Interactive RPG – Japan style The long-awaited 3D

update of Megaman's '80s platform/shooting adventures. The addition of an RPG element has provided some depth, but the repetitive nature of the game travelling around destroying big robot after big robot - could put vou off. ★★★

Michael Owen's World League Soccer '99

■ Sports ■ 1-2 players ■ EIDOS Not taking the
Michael Ooh, this looks bad, but you'd be hard pushed to fault it otherwise because it plays like a dream. The finest details of footy have been recreated with the Liverpudlian Boy Wonder in a starring role, and the intuitive controls, sexy combos and realistic difficulty level make this a fine interpretation. ***

Micro Machines V3 Racing 1-8 players

■ Codemasters ■ Platinum Tiny cars race around your living room The old 2D game souped up into pseudo-3D for a modern audience, and it's a beauty. There are 30 innovative courses, based on kitchen tables and school desks, coupled with a multi-player game that's just beautifully designed and great overhead camera. And all of this for just 20 quid? We must be

Or try: Motor Mash # 1-4 players ■ Ocean ■ Old idea with a new twist. *

Mortal Kombat 4 Fighting ■ 1-2 players ■ GT Interactive "Come and

'ave a go if you think..."
Although in 3D, this fails to take advantage of the extra dimension thus boiling down to the same old tedious MK features again and again. The controls and characters look incredibly over-familiar, and it's not a patch on *Tekken 3*. Strictly for fans of the series. **

Or try: Mortal Kombat Trilogy ■ 1-2 players ■ GT Interactive
Everything from the previous three. **

Mr Domino

■ Puzzler ■ 1 player ■ JVC Does exactly what it says on the tin A PSX version of those Record Breakers-style dominotoppling events, with a central character cursed with the inability to stop walking. Work out what's going on, and this gets addictive. but it suffers from that typically Japanese too-easy feel. ★★★

Music: Music Creation for the PlayStation Music creation 1 1 player Codemasters Custom

your very own techno Create your own toons and a psychedelic polygon video to go with them, using a system of manipulating little chunks of music and video. This fulfils its purpose – enabling anyone to create pumping dance but it's too difficult for novices and too insulting for more professional

deck-spinners. ★★★

Or try: Fluid ■ Music ■ 1 player ■ SCEE ■ Interactive aquation music. ***



N20 ■ Shooter ■ 1-2 players **■** Gremlin Interactive Old

style shooter Traditional shoot-'em-up, set in futuristic tunnels, and more on-rails than Gremlin would have you believe. It feels similar to *Tempest* and is good fun in a retro sense, but despite its addictive powers, it's just not that exciting. **

NBA Live 99 ■ Sports ■ 1-8 players ■ EA Sports That's a slam-dun

Silky motion capture, proper gurning faces, and Simulation and Arcade modes to satisfy proper basketball fans and normal people alike. With a massive number of

stats, a wodge of tactical plays and the now-obligatory create-a-player mode, this should keep Rodman fans quiet all day. *** Or try: NBA Hangtime # 1-4 players ■ GT Interactive ■ Very competent but uninspired. **

Need for Speed 3 Racing III 1-2 players III EA Sports I feel the need... Plenty of modes to make the game last longer, great graphics and a good sense of speed (lucky, what with the name and everything). The chance to leg it from the police and the two-player mode make this the best NFS so far, but it has been overtaken on the inside by Or try: Test Drive 4 III 1-2

players ■ EA Sports ■ Smooth graphics neat tracks intuitive controls. ***

NFL Blitz Sports ■ 1-2 players ■ GT Interactive US footy simplified and made fun Departing from the usual American football style (overloading on rules and stopping for a rest every other minute) and moving to something more worthwhile (emphasis on speed, simple controls, usage of fists), this is top fun. It's slightly repetitive and looks glitchy, but that's easy to forgive. ★★★ Or try: NFL Extreme ■ 1-4 players ■ SCEE ■ US footy

Sports 1-2 players **■** Electronic Arts Ice hockey for mother puckers Intelligent team-mates and all the stats you'll need aren't enough to save this disappointing take on the sadist's favourite sport. The puck finds itself in the net for most of the game, at

simplified and made dull. *

the expense of proper action. ★★ Or try: NHL Powerplay '98 ■ 1-2 players ■ Virgin ■ Sturdy but slow. **

Ninja: Shadow of Darkness Action adventure





The ice is right

Brrrr! Nippy out, isn't it? The perfect conditions in which to pick the best ice hockey game ever.



1. NHL 98 PC Electronic Arts

EA's puck extravaganza pulls off the speed and fluidity of ice hockey without sacrificing player involvement. The other computer opponents are consummate professionals, and it looks lovely, with the 3Dfx-aided hi-res and realistically ugly player faces making for games worthy of late-night C5 coverage.

2. Wayne Gretsky's 3D Hockey

■ PlayStation/N64 ■ GT Interactive

Obviously not as good looking as EA's number one, and you wouldn't know who Mr Gretsky was if he didn't have a game named after him. The arcadey nature and the sheer speed of play (in the style of the NBA Jam and NFL Blitz series) make for exciting games, and there's a dugout-full of options to ensure that your time with Wayne is time well spent. It manages to be pleasingly tricky, too.

3. NHL Breakaway '98

■ PlayStation/N64 ■ Acclaim **Entertainment**

As we travel down the table, the graphics start to feel ropier, the controls become less intuitive and the feeling that you're truly in control of the fast-paced action diminishes. The game is still as quick as it should be, the icebound computer opposition is sufficiently intelligent and the repetitive organ strikes up a good tune. Somehow, though Breakaway just doesn't feel right.

4. Actua Ice Hockey

■ PlayStation/PC ■ Gremlin Certainly lives up to its "Actua" label, with a weird ice-clearing automaton putting in a midmatch appearance, and the ref skating about as only he can. But while the controls are simplistic and easy to use, there's a general lack of depth and speed, and your opponents seem to dispense with fair play in favour of just out-andout cheating. The all-important fights are disappointingly noninteractive, too

5. NHL Faceoff '99 ■ PlayStation ■ SCEE

This is the fifth-best ice hockey sim, and its general averageness highlights just how few great ice hockey games there are available. Faceoff flows smoothly enough, but there's a lack of challenge from the weedy Al opponents, and the in-game tactics and moves are too difficult to pull off. A last-resort purchase.









PlayStation

Interactive Here comes the man in black... A great range of punches, kicks and magic, coupled with a decent amount of switchfinding and the like, make this enjoyable enough. But, sadly, the odd camera system spoils the lovely graphics, and overall, the game is horribly difficult. ** Or try: Soviet Strike # 1 player ■ EA Classics ■ Platinum ■ More of the same ***

Oddworld: Abe's **Exoddus** Puzzle # 1-2 players # GT Interactive Puzzly platform

ne with agile alien Wander through screens of 2D platforms and rescue your friends, solving puzzles along the way. Often infuriating rather than tricky, but with a host of neat touches and graphics good enough to frame this is a long-lasting and enjoyable challenge ***

Or try: Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee 1 1 player GT Platinum ■ Save cute-but-ugly alien from the meat factory.

ODT Platformer 1 1 player Psygnosis Disappointing ird-person adventure

thing The first real Tomb Raider clone, with a sizeable slice of RPG chucked in and one-move-andyou're-dead tricks and traps. The sprawling levels promise much, but the controls are dreadful and the whole experience is too difficult to extract any fun from. **

Pandemonium 2 ■ Platformer ■ 1 player
■ BMG Interactive It's chaos

■ "Oh, come on." "Get a

bloody move on." "Where

are you going, you idiot?"

As we sat in my bedroom,

staring at the screen - our

eyes filled with hatred and

our hands trembling - my

could have wrought so

of co-operative threeplayer Gauntlet II

much loathing. What had

started as a fun little round

had descended into a hate

triangle of epic proportions.

The trouble stemmed

from the point when - by

a cruel twist of fate - one

of us was separated from

outside a complex maze,

he was inside, and we just

couldn't finish off the level

until he was out. Our early

began with good-natured

jibes, but soon descended

into infuriated shouts of

efforts to be reunited

the others. We were stood

two mates and I wondered how a simple Amiga game

THE GAME THAT RUINED MY LIFE

in there Crystal Dynamics didn't take criticism of the original on board, and the augmented breasts of female lead Nikki are the only change here. Pandemonium 2 still suffers from basic platform sins (like the leap of faith), and the lack of challenge and appaling camera will make you cry. **

Or try: Pandemonium ■ 1 player ■ BMG Interactive

■ Platinum ■ Two sorcerer's apprentices jump about. ★★★



PaRappa the Rapper ■ Rapping ■ 1 player ■ SCEE Puppy love songs it's time to join the the rapping dog with tunes make this brilliantly funny

attitude". A selection of fantastic and completely original. Rap "Good" and you're sure to finish PaRappa in an afternoon, but this said, it's still something you should have a lot of fun with. $\star\star\star\star$

Point Blank ■ Light-gun shooter ■ 1-4 players ■ Namco Grab your

gun Only the Japanese could create a shooting gallery featuring ninjas and piranhas, stick in a fourplayer mode and still make it one of the most weirdly addictive gameplay experiences this side of Time Crisis. ★★★★

Or try: Crypt Killer 1 player ■ Konami ■ Poor-man's light-gun

Pool Shark Sports # 1-2 player

Throw away the Gauntlet

Top-down maze game Gauntlet II might be great in one-

player, but it lost Mark Green his friends. Yes, both of them.

"Go that way!" and "What

By the time we got back

the hell are you doing?"

together, it was too late.

morbid silence enveloped

the room, punctuated only

by sound of the occasional

We played on, but a

insult through gritted

■ Gremlin A game "baized" on the popular sport Almost identical to other snooker sims, the graphics are okay but it inexplicably replaces the customisable power bar with some golf-style click-atthe-right-moment nonsense. And is plaving snooker on your own actually all that much fun? The answer is no, fact fans. ★★★

Premier Manager '98 ■ Sports management ■ 1-4 players ■ Gremlin Interactive Football

management for everyone It's the most comprehensive simulation this side of Ruud's office, and yet it's also clearly presented and easy to understand. Would-be Hoddles (if there be any) will enjoy months of re-creating England's various spectacular World Cup crash-outs. ★★★

Psvbadek ■ Racer ■ 1 player ■ Psygnosis Cute snowboardy

platformer Put platforming and snowboarding in the same pot and you get this; a curious hotch-potch of racing, shooting and jumping sub-games that doesn't really work. The controls are horrendous. the board unresponsive and the camera controls a joke. It might be varied, but it's far too difficult and ultimately pointless. **

Rage Racer ■ Racing ■ 1 player ■ Namco

Arcade racing in your house The third *Ridge Racer* is speedy, moodily good looking and optionladen. This is the definitive racer if vou like vour cars a bit more"Woawoah-woooaaahhhh!" than Gran Turismo. Let down only by the lack

Or try: Peak Performance ■ 1 player ■ Electronic Arts ■ Great editing, poor driving. ★

teeth. Whole hours passed

with only the ticking of

the sodding way" to be

heard, until my friends

a muttered farewell.

happened to them ...

the clock and "Get out of

finally left the house with

I often wonder what

Rampage World Tour ■ Smash-'em-up ■ 1 player ■ GT Interactive Old-school

bizarro building-smasher An attempt to bring a very old arcade game up to date for a '90s audience. It was original and fun at the time but now it falls at the first hurdle by being too simplistic, too easy and looking very poor indeed. Check out the three massive monsters, though, *

Rapid Racer

■ Racing ■ 1-2 players
■ SCEE Powerboat racing
The random "track" generator is a good inclusion, and the hi-res visuals will undoubtedly make jaws drop, but the handling and lack of realism causes it to sink slowly and gracefully to the bottom of the gaming ocean. ★★

Or try: Jet Rider 2 ■ 1-2 players

■ SCEE ■ Haphazard water-bound fun. **

Resident Evil

Action adventure ■ 1 player ■ Capcom Boo! A decent interactive movie at long last. Genuinely frightening and the first game to achieve a proper film-like anticipation of the next scene, aided in part by brilliantly poor acting. Detailed backgrounds and a great plot. Keep a clean pair of pants handy, kids! ****

Or try: Clock Tower ■ 1 player ■ ASCII ■ Insanity, intrique and ghastly Japanese murder. **

Resident Evil: Director's Cut ■ Action adventure ■ 1 player ■ Capcom Added

alue version of RE1, plus a demo of the sequel Now that we have RE2, the significance of the demo here is diminishing, but if you still don't have the original, this is a nigh-on essential purchase. This is the Japanese version, so is bound to attract the hardcore



Resident Full 2 Action adventure

■ 1 player ■ Capcom Scary guel to the original gore**fest** The two-character feature is a touch gimmicky, and the puzzles are similar to the first incarnation but RE2 is better than the original in all other respects. The improved script and acting, and the wildly increased zombie count, will scare your skin off. ***

Or try: The City of Lost Children ■ 1 player ■ Psygnosis ■ Fiddly, French. ★★

Ridge Racer Revolution

■ Racer ■ 1-2 players ■ Namco ■ Platinum Fast

car action The definitive arcade racer. Looks absolutely beautiful, but it's the fantastic arcade-style handling and ridiculous speed that should have you racing over the three one-player tracks for quite unreasonable amounts of your life. The five-course two-player link-up mode finishes off an utterly brilliant package. ***

Or try: Ridge Racer 1 player ■ Namco ■ Platinum ■ Brilliant, but smoothly overtaken by Revolution. ★★★★

Rival Schools Fighter ■ 1-2 players ■ Virgin Interactive Teachers and students take to the

ring Absolutely mad Grange Hillstyle fighter, featuring rival high schools, with over-the-top moves

and a huge selection of modes and sub-games. It's not technically great, but it's a whole heap of fun, and its relative simplicity and easily pulled-off moves make it a good option if you usually steer clear of smack-'em-ups. ***

Road Rash 3D

■ Racing ■ 1-6 players ■ Electronic Arts Manx TT meets WWF With four pasty gangs to get involved in, this is the racer for people who like the look of bruises on a man. The racing is supplemented by smacking other riders about, but unfortunately the two don't balance well in practice.

It's got speed, though, plenty of

cool hikes to choose from and it's

certainly a bit of a looker. ★★★ **Rogue Trip** Shooter ■ 1-2 player ■ GT Interactive Bang-bang,

boom-boom driving game The "hilarious" taxi driver-based plot hears no relevance to the game and the variety of ways in which you can attack other cars are strangely unsatisfying. It's pretty, and the ability to shoot anything that moves (or doesn't move) is welcome, but spending half an hour destroying cars on each level is never liable to grip you in the right places. ★★

R-Types Shooter 🖩 1 player 🖪 Virgin Interactive Combo of cla

scrolling shooters Classic shooters *R-Type* parts un et deux presented for your delectation: emulated rather than converted and therefore closer than close to the originals. The lovely level designs, the perfect power-ups and the sheer addictiveness of it all, squeezed into your little portable TV. Sweet. ***

S.C.A.R.S ■ Racing ■ 1-4 players

■ Ubisoft Cute racer A faithful attempt at a Mario Kart clone, but rather less immediate. It has a rather difficult control system that rewards patience, and greater deviations in style and handling between the individual vehicles but the multi-player game option - Mario's strong point - is not nearly as enjoyable. **

Small Soldiers ■ Platformer ■ 1-2 players ■ Electronic Arts Movie-

based tin-men exploitsDespite the decent visuals and the responsive controls, simply running about and collecting objects isn't fun for long and you'll soon go back to playing with the cat. The deathmatch could have saved it, if it hadn't been a tedious hour-long runabout followed by a five-second random gun-fest. Tedious. ★★

Sentinel Returns

■ Strategy ■ 1-2 players ■ Psygnosis Classic '80s tactics Your aim is to absorb the Sentinel, who sits on the highest point on the landscape, and the attempt has lost little in translation from 8-bit to PSX, especially as the graphics have all been kept deliberately low key to maintain the feel of the '80s original. Eerie,

massive and - praise the Lord - a successful retro game. ***



Soul Blade ■ Fighting ■ 1-2 players ■ Namco ■ Platinum Ta on Tekken Similar to the Tekken series, with huge weapons, and

rather good. The graphics are top and the 3D moves will have your eyes popping out of your skull. As you're stabbed in the back with a humongous sword.***

Spawn: The Eternal ■ Action ■ 1 player ■ SCEE

ie-based nonsense Looking very similar to Lara Croft's infamous adventures, but lacking the excellent level design, depth of gameplay or graphics, Spawn tries to marry fighting and dungeon exploration, but there're no prizes for failing so miserably. *

Spice World

Music/dancing ■ 1 player SCEE | Platinum The fab five... er, four Looking a little rushed this is the chance vou've waited for. Choreograph cartoon Spices to their own music There are so few moves and rewards for success, that it's (inevitably) one for the fans, and liable to grate. Rather like the Girls themselves. *

Spyro the Dragon Platformer ■ 1 player ■ SCEE

Platforming with a camp dinosaur Starring a purple My Little Pony/dinosaur hybrid, this gorgeous 3D platformer is partly aimed at the kids, as the initially simplistic and dull early levels demonstrate. But the dragonrescuing missions and platforming theme are well-crafted, and the worlds are huuuge. ★★

Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha

■ Fighting ■ 1-2 players Capcom Another in the

beat-'em-up series Conversion of the first 3D *SF* coin-op, with loads of extra bits. Excellent speed and good backgrounds, as well as pleasingly familiar moves and style, make it just as intuitive as its great

Or try: Marvel Super Heroes ■ 1-2 players ■ Capcom ■ 2D super hero combat. ***

Also available: Street Fighter Collection ■ 1-2 players ■ Virgin nteractive Entertainment

■ Missed opportunity for a history

Super Puzzle Fighter 2

■ Puzzler ■ 1-2 players **■** Virgin Interactive

Entertainment Superb
Tetris-style puzzling Mix Tetris
and Bust-A-Move, add some Street Fighter kiddie characters and you have one of the best puzzlers of all time. It's insanely addictive in twoplayer mode, but try one-player and you'll have the family banging on your door, wondering where you've been for the past month.

Tekken 2 **■ Fighting ■ 1-2 players**

■ Namco Round two... fight! Again, it used to be the best beat-'em-up... until *Tekken 3* arrived. The character models wouldn't look out of place in a pre-rendered demo, the one-player game is totally engrossing (uncommon for a fighter) and there are plenty of moves, bosses and secrets to get your teeth into. ★★★★

Or try: Tekken ■ 1-2 players ■ Namco ■ Round one... fight!



Tekken 3

■ Fighting ■ 1-2 players ■ Namco Round Thr... oh never mind Here they are again.

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Similar to Tekken 2, but a major improvement in almost every way graphically flawless and the new moves give something for both newcomers and veterans. There's so much to do, that it's almost the Mario of fighting games. But no cute stuff. ★★★★

Or try: Dynasty Warriors ■ 1 player ■ Ocean ■ Gorgeous looking, but still no match for the Tekken series. ★★★

Tenchu Fighter ■ 1 player ■ Activision Lara Croft and

the oriental arts combine Starring a bloke who gets about with the aid of a grappling hook, this hugely atmospheric kung-fu fighting/exploring game looks suspiciously similar to the *Tomb* Raider games. If the camera hadn't made things difficult and the graphics had been less glitchy, this could have been a five. ***

Test Drive 4x4 Racing ■ 1 player
■ Electronic Arts Racing for

the tedious Six courses five classes of car and a whole variety of environments to race about in should be adequate, but 4x4 looks terrible and there's an inexplicable lack of speed. The incessant over excited commentary, coupled with flying up into the air at every bump, will ultimately get on your

Or try: Test Drive 5 ■ 1-2 players ■ Electronic Arts ■ Driving again, then. ★★

The Lost World ■ Platformer ■ 1 player ■ FA Classics ■ Platinum

toric platforming piffle Whoever decided that Spielberg's dino-sequel was crying out for a pseudo-3D platform interpretation needs stomping on The graphics are great, which makes controlling the assorted humans and dinosaurs mildly pleasurable, but it's chock-full of bugs, platform game sins and ropey levels. *

Theme Hospital ■ Strategy ■ 1 player ■ Electronic Arts Medical

resource management More of a geriatric hospital these days, and the lack of PSX mouse control can make it a sod to play. It's okay, but this build-vour-own-hospitaland-cure-diabolical-comedy-style illnesses strategy is looking a little bit Bloaty Head in today's age of Command & Conquer and



Time Crisis ■ Light-gun shooter

■ 1 player ■ Namco Go for your gun The innovative "duck and reload" option is present, as is the G-Con 45 light gun. Both make for exciting, bloody and flowing play that relies on pure speed. With bonus levels as a reward for performance, don't worry about the longevity - just feel the power.

Or try: Judge Dredd ■ 1 player ■ Gremlin Interactive ■ Enjoyable 3D blaster. ★★

TOCA 2 Racing ■ 1-2 player ■ Codemasters Yet more touring car mayhem Sweet driving action with a garage-full of cars that all handle differently and embrace accurate driving physics (whatever that is). If it wasn't for

its intense difficulty, this'd be the

perfect racer, with very accurate courses and speed, and a real smoothness that'll genuinely frighten you. Rev on! ★★★ Or try: TOCA Touring Car ■ 1 player ■ Codemasters ■ One of the first proper racing sims

Tomb Raider ■ Platformer ■ 1 player
■ EIDOS Interactive Indiana nes meets Melinda

Messenger It made Lara Croft a global icon and shoved many positive images of computer games into the mass media, but it was the excellent level design and atmosphere that sold the game Tomb Raider wiped off some of Mario's smile, and showed that a pretty face and great gameplay aren't mutually exclusive *** Or try: Deathtrap Dungeon

■ 1 player ■ EIDOS Interactiv Poor graphics and a worrying

Tomb Raider III ■ Platformer ■ 1 player ■ FIDOS The hitch is had

Hello, Lara. Back for a third time are you? I see you've brought a new hi-res mode and some more well-designed, good-looking levels for us to peruse. Oh, and you've made everything a lot more difficult, with some occasionally frustrating moments thanks to the controls and camera. But you

know we still love you. **
Or try: Tomb Raider II ■ 1 player ■ EIDOS Interactive ■ "Stop staring at my butt!"

Tombi ■ Platformer ■ 1 player **■ SCEE Porcine platfo**

ver Relying on secrets and level design to carry it through, rather than visuals or elaborate controls. Tombi works a treat. A series of innovative tasks to carry out throughout the game makes it part platformer, part RPG and a bit special. And the downside? Too much hammed-up acting. ★★★

Total NBA '98

■ Sports ■ 1-8 players ■ Sony Get in the hoop A sim which requires a degree of real determination to both learn and succeed, thanks to intelligent computer-controlled opponents. A great create-a-player mode, a whole range of options and total control over your players mean that, once it's flowing Total NBA '98 is as addictive and beautiful to watch as the real thing (a subjective opinion, obviously), ***

Treasures of the Deep ■ Adventure ■ 1 player

■ SCEE Underwater exploration The lack of levels is compensated for by a sharply rising difficulty curve and a wide variety of both weapons and exploratory missions – from crashed jumbo jets to Aztec cities The underwater aspect is a bit of a gimmick, though. ***

True Pinball Pinball ■ 1 player ■ Ocean ■ Platinum Flipping mad

One of the best pinball sims, but that doesn't make it an essential purchase unless you're too scared to go down the arcade. Across the four tables, the choice of 2D and 3D views doesn't help when the visuals are so poor, but the physics of the ball work well and there're the obligatory multi-ball and video displays. **

Vigilante 8 Racing ■ 1-2 players ■ Activision Destructive '70s-influenced driving shoot-'em-up Blowing up buildings and cars using "crayzee 70s vehicles sounds great, but

with just more destruction per extra level and no real "woomph behind the explosions, monotony is hot on your heels. ** Or try: Twisted Metal 2 1-2 players ■ SCEE ■ Futuristic firstperson shooter. **

V-Rally
■ Driving ■ 1-2 player ■ Infogrames ■ Platinum
Rally rather good Since GT it's been difficult for other driving games to make themselves heard. but this age-old PlayStation rally simulation is a worthy contender, especially at a budget price. Even simply staying on the track is more difficult than you'd expect, but the addition of Dual Shock rumblings

Platinum re-release a sensible purchase. *** Or try: Tommi Makinen Rally ■ 1-2 players ■ Europress ■ 130 tracks, but still beaten to the flag by the competition. **

and another car make this new

Wargames ■ Strategy ■ 1-2 players ■ Electronic Arts Action-

orientated strategy game The missions are simple and limited in number, but this is a very worthy action-based alternative to C&C. The wide range of vehicles you can control and the capture-theflag two-player game, will keep you laughing as you watch men die. ***



Warhammer: **Dark Omen**

■ Strategy ■ 1 player **■** Electronic Arts Sequel to the fantasy-based RPG This suffers because of the joypad control and as you scrap on the polygon-based battle grounds, earning cash for more weaponry, the regular feeling of not quite understanding what's going on and the need to repeat certain missions many times over, makes this one for the fans only. ***

Wild Arms ■ RPG ■ 1 player ■ SCEE

Huge role-play adventure Strong RPG, but eclipsed by the shadow of Squaresoft's seminal classic Final Fantasy VII. Suffers from Final Fantasy's random battle syndrome and the slick-but-retrolooking visuals strip away much of the feeling of involvement, but it's still very absorbing. ★★★

WipEout ■ Racing ■ 1-2 players ■ Psygnosis ■ Platinum
The game that made the
PlayStation the console of choice It boasts the soundtrack that helped made gaming "cool" but unforgiving controls and nasty opposing craft mean you'll need perseverance. Your reward sees you careering down classic neon tracks at incredible speeds and throwing up your lunch. ** Or try: Motorhead ■ 1-2

players
Gremlin Interactive

Furious racing action. ***

WipEout 2097 ■ Racing ■ 1-2 players
■ Psygnosis A sequel 100
years in the making A better bet than the original for the casual racer, as the learning curve is more gentle, but the new, more difficult class Psygnosis has added should make the veterans weep. Comes with excellent CPU opposition, more weapons and the twistiest tracks this side of Alton Towers.

World Cup '98
■ Sports ■ Multi-player
■ EA Sports Sophisticated
stadium football The classiest football package about, and the only one where soundly whipping Argentina gives you any real feel-good factor. Des and Motty are on the mic, and you get seemingly infinite options and stats, but most crucially, the gameplay's also more intelligent than its predecessors. Great controls and camera angles mean instant satisfaction, but with questionable longevity. ***

Worms
■ Puzzler ■ 1-4 players Ocean Platinum Sadistic invertebrates strap on weapons and cause death

Tries too hard to be cute and different, and subsequently has a very gimmicky feel. The shareware origins are all-too easy to discern and the AI will make you spit blood, so *Worms* is best played with a friend. On the plus side, you can customise the game to your heart's content. **

WWF Warzone Wrestling ■ 1-4 players
■ Acclaim Entertainment

Lardy leotard lovelies fight it out With moves and characters that make play interesting and a great create-a-player section that enables you to custom-build your own fighter. Unfortunately, it's a bit slow and sluggish, and there's little variety from fight to fight, but the range of modes from Trainer to All-Out War, should help to keep you vaguely interested. ★★★★
Or try: WCW Nitro ■ 1-2 players THQ Crazy men in swimming costumes. **

Xenocracy Shooter ■ 1-2 players ■ Grolier Interactive Mission-based space

shooter Strategy and tactics in this shooter turn out to have little bearing on the actual game you end up playing, and the mission briefings lead you to expect more than there is. There's plenty of shooting, but it's dull stuff with dismal graphics, difficult controls and weapons that are genetic clones of one another **

X-Men Vs Street Fighter ■ 1-2 players ■ Virgin Interactive

Entertainment Fight! Merges the X-Men into the Street Fighter universe, and maintains the contro system and sprite-based characters that you've come to expect from the series, while adding fighters of a size to rival the Empire State Building. A bit repetitive, jerky and shallow to please true fighting

Zero Divide 2 Fighter ■ 1-2 players ■ SCEE

ad robot-beating gam There's hardly any moves. There's no feeling of contact. There aren't nearly enough flashing lights or big bangs. There's no sensation of adrenaline coursing at speed through your throbbing veins. And it looks terrible. Best leave it on the shelf, then. *

Or try: Bio Freaks ■ 1-2 players ■ GT Interactive ■ Unhinged human-robot hybrid tussling ★★★

PC

Actua Ice Hockey ■ Sports ■ 1-3 players ■ Gremlin Interactive

Freezing fast-paced action Likely to be overshadowed by NHL '99, but still the beauty of the ice hockey world, despite some glitchy graphics, especially since you get

to play as any one of the world's top teams. The controls are tricky, but it all takes place at a decent pace, and the very harsh computer opponent and tactics will satisfy true bloodsport... er, sorry, ice hockey fans. **

Actua Soccer 2 ■ Sports ■ 1-4 players

■ Gremlin Interactive Actually football Convincing graphics and a shedload of camera angles, but the latter seem kind of pointless when you will almost certainly be sticking with one. The play is frustrating, there's a very limited number of options and, quite shockingly, it's worse than its PlayStation incarnation. ★★★ Or try: Jack Charlton's Soccer Nation ■ 1 player ■

Attica The worst football game

Actua Tennis ■ Sports ■ 1-4 players ■ Gremlin Interactive

ever. *

Strawbs and cream simPacked with stats and gorgeous motion capture, but introducing a power bar sacrifices the directional control that you really need in a tennis game. The fallibility of the computer opponents can make for annoying matches, too. And why on Earth is Barry Davies doing the commentary? $\star\star\star$

Or try: Game, Net and Match ■ Sports ■ 1-2 players ■ Blue Byte Frill-free, networked tennis.

Andretti Racing ■ Racing ■ 1 player ■ EA Classics ■ Budget Tarmac **burning driving sim** A rather dull race around several boring American ovals, Luckily, there's a stock car racing section and some slightly more exciting tracks to liven things up a bit. Although we'd only recommend this to arcade racing fans, there are nearly enough options to satisfy the

more serious simmer. * **BioSys** ■ Strategy/adventure ■ 1 player ■ Take 2 Interactive Survive alone in a dome Stay alive by keeping your gigantic biodome ticking over BioSys chucks a load of puzzles and resource management at you. but doesn't become frustrating.

The plot will suck you in, but you

might find it a bit slow. ** Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain RPG 1 player

■ Activision ■ Budget Drac **on your PC** This vampire-laden top-down *Gauntlet*-style RPG is as hammed up as a side portion of gammon, and as bad-taste as they come, with maiden's blood being gulped down all over the shop. But it looks abysmal and the linear monotonous nature of the levels makes for abject tedium. **

Buggy ■ Driving ■ 1-2 players ■ Gremlin Interactive Radio-controlled racing lunacy The 16 teeny-weeny cars are heaven to handle, bouncing and skidding all over the shop, and have enough differences to make them lasting fun. But the tracks - indoors and out - while lovely to look at, are a bit confusing, and there's not the fun or hidden depth of Mario and friends. ★★★

Bust-A-Move 2 ■ Puzzler ■ 1-2 players Acclaim Entertainment Match bubbles, go mad One

of the most addictive puzzlers since Tetris, bringing its bubblecolliding strategies to your screen in an explosion of rainbow-hued visuals. It's a simple idea, and provides much more of a challenge than you'd initially think, with the

particularly addictive two-player mode highlighting the brilliance of the concept. **

Caesar III

Strategy ■ 1 player ■ Sierra Roman-based strategy antics There's two to play this either as a straight *Sim City* rip-off, or as a mission-based Roman Emperor-'em-up. It's complicated, and the amount of stuff to do may bring on a "Caesar", but stick at it and you'll find it involving and addictive. ***

Carmageddon 2: Carpocalypse Now ■ Driving ■ 1-6 players ■ Sales Curve Bloody car

action The controversy addled road-rager is back once again, complete with the UK's greenblooded zombies instead of redblooded humans. With the game structure improved to include races and deathmatches, and a load of great cars, interesting power-ups and messy weapons, it's a pleasing way to pass the time. **



Castrol Honda Superbikes World Championship ■ Racing ■ 1 player ■ Interactive Entertainment

Motorbikes A playable game, but the over-sensitive controls make it far too hard ** Championship Manager 2 **■** Sports management

■ 1-8 players ■ EIDOS Interactive Be Key Keegan With CM3 imminent, this prequel has appeared at a bargain price. Looking a little out-of-date now, and still far. far too easy, it's nevertheless engrossing and packed with neat details. ***

Creatures 2 ■ Breed-'em-up ■ 1 player ■ Mindscape Raise another family of cuddly creatures Less a game, more an exercise in

parenthood, the main idea behind Creatures 2 is to breed your race of furry critters and then use them to search for biotechnical bits and bobs. This new release has more options, more enemies and more places to explore. **

Conflict: Freespace The Great War ■ Space combat ■ Multiplayer ■ Interplay Sprawling, intricate, space shooter Escort this, protect that, shoot the

other – Conflict might at first seem like a direct X-wing vs TIE-Fighter rip-off, but it's more the game that X-wing always should have been. Watch out for the superb explosions, cleverly designed missions and plenty of replayability. ***

Or try: X-wing vs TIE Fighter
■ Multi-player ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment ■ Impressive Star Wars-based shooter. ★★★

Cyberstorm 2: Corporate Wars ■ Strategy ■ 1-8 players ■ Sierra ■ Budget

■ Futuristic battle sim Topdown strategy action with a bunch of battle machines and featuring play so complex that your brain will break. It's made more interesting by the need to build your equipment from its component parts, and the choice of turn-based or real-time play is handy, but this is still distinctly average. **



Curse of

Curse of
Monkey Island
Adventure 1 player
LucasArts Fantastic pointand-click adventure Genuinely amusing, and with clever puzzles, Monkey Island scores well for its controls, which make exploring and examining as easy as possible. Great to look at and to listen to, if a tad frustrating and illogical, but mostly top notch. ***

Dark Reign
■ Strategy ■ 1-2 players
■ Activision ■ budget

Another futuristic battle sim The future-bound setting of this real-time strategy title, the intelligence of the missions and the clear interface make for a pleasurable experience. At this price, you can't go wrong, even if the visuals and sounds leave a little to be desired. ***

Or try: Armour Command ■ 1 player ■ Take 2 Interactive

■ Tanks 'n' strategy. ★★★ DethKarz

Racing **1**-8 players ■ Infogrames More spaceage racing A futuristic racer akin to WipFout and the like. The four worlds and 12 circuits are brilliantly designed in a rollercoaster vein and there's tons of weaponry to get your sweaty mitts on. But the continual skidding off the road and steep learning curve will put you off eventually. **

Destruction Derby 2 Racing 1-10 players (turn-taking) ■ Psygnosis

LONG TERM TEST

Wave Race 64

Damp squib or wet dream?

MM 5230

■ During the N64's

childhood, playground

fights would always be

won by the cocky little

got a decent serious

PlayStation. "You haven't

racer," teased Sony's grey

cry. And yet, hiding in the

shadows, was a quiet kid

- Wave Race 64. He knew

he could end the N64's

humiliation, but no-one

paid him any attention.

even N64 owners often

Race is still the N64's best

forget it exists, Wave

Despite the fact that

box, and the N64 would

normal racing game, but better as an all-out smash-'em-up that gives edge-of-your-seat thrills, coupled with gorgeous visuals and images of your car as it disintegrates. Great tracks, genuine speed and smart

Diablo **■** Strategy/RPG ■ 1-4 players ■ Blizzard Hack 'n' slash adventure

A real-time strategy RPG that's incredibly intuitive, with hidden depths and complexity to be found if you delve deeper into its dark and sticky innards. A whole load of monster-killing and spellcasting to keep beardy types happy, absolutely massive and it looks like a dream too. ***



Die By The Sword Adventure 1 1 player

■ Interplay Flawed combat masterpiece Combat/adventure in a medieval/fantasy world with a third person/ sweeping camera view. The engine, which calculates animation by looking at both bone joints and gravity, does the biz, but winning every battle in one move defeats the purpose. **

Or try: Tomb Raider II ■ 1 player ■ EIDOS Interactive ■ A second outing for the lovely Lara.

Dune 2000 Strategy III 1 player
III Electronic Arts The granddad of strategy

MAN PERMIT

to make even today's

arcade jet ski games look

primitive, and the realistic

ripples, splashes and roars

of the waters would even

bring a smile to Captain

Birdseye's wizened face.

and handling where Mr

Miyamoto and co. excel.

The analogue stick gives

ski and all its reactions are

nigh-on perfect as it bobs

waves. The shortcomings

they were two years ago

the game isn't drawing

exact control of the iet

and slides through the

are more obvious than

that far ahead and the

frame rate leaves a little

to be desired - but there's

still enough here to leave

you dripping for more.

But it's in the controls

computer cars, too. Yav! ****

Dungeon Keeper Strategy 1 1 player ■ EA Classics Cla

re-invigorated The original

strategy game. This new version

houses 27 levels and three "tribes"

to choose from, but doesn't offer any further obvious improvements

aside from the new visuals. It's too

simplistic to be great and faces

notentially better up-and-coming

Dune invented the real-time

dungeon management Run your own murky torture chamber in this strategy-laden epic. Difficult at first, especially with the mixture of game modes and cameras, but the sense of humour and finelytuned gameplay will eventually

FA Premier League Football Manager 99 Sports 🛮 1 playe

■ Electronic Arts Be Glenn dle, but better Including both Scottish and English divisions and giving you plenty of coaching and business matters to deal with, this is the most realistic football management title out there - your decisions really affect the turnout of games. The icing and candles on the cake are the commentary by John Motson and the lovelyoking 3D kickabouts. ***

F1 Racing Simulation
■ Driver ■ 1-8 players ■ Ubisoft Driving for would-be Damons All the

stats and tracks are here, and the handling and controls are perfect. There's a slight lack of realism and customisation options, but it's very fast and offers a real challenge. Don't expect to be able to smash into verges without paying the ultimate price - your death.

Or try: Alain Prost Grand Prix ■ 1 player ■ Ocean ■ Similar but less realistic. ★★

The Fifth Element Puzzle ■ 1 player ■ Ubisoft

Obscure futuristic movie tie-in Twenty three levels of Tomb Raider-style shenanigans, made to the usual recipe; an equal measure of running and jumping, and a big "knob" of shooting. The difficult controls and camera difficulties hamper the gameplay, though, and it bears less relevance to the film than you'd think. ★★



Final Fantasy VII RPG 1 player EIDOS Interactive Why shouldn't the PC have the best RPG

ever as well? It'll keep you up all night it'll make you cry it'll make your nose bleed, but only if someone hits you in the face with a copy of it. Which they ought to, if you don't buy it. A great story, lavish graphics and brilliant selection of spells. It's a little confusing, rarely allowing you to see your opponents before you get into a fight, but put this down to Japanese guirkiness and you'll be on to a winner. ***

Flight Simulator 98 ■ Three guesses ■ 1 player **■** Microsoft Ultra eroplane antics This isn't for the casual gamer, including, as it does, a load of knobs to get the hang of. In that it's supposed to be like a true flying experience, the controls are difficult, but some of the graphics are less realistic than

you might like. There's also a quite nightmarishly difficult-to-control helicopter included as a "bit of a

laugh", too. ★★★

Or try: Fighter Pilot ■ 1-2 player ■ Electronic Arts
■ Shooting for avid pilots. ★★★

Football World Manager ■ Sports ■ 1 player ■ Ubisoft

cornucopia of clubs, a clear and easy-to-use interface and not too much confusing financial rubbish. Unfortunately, when your brilliant decisions get transferred to the actual games, it's difficult to make out what's going on and the highlights are too short. Promising, but unfulfilling. ★★★

Forsaken ■ First-person shooter ■ 1-16 players ■ Acclaim **Entertainment Almost** Quake - almost certainly

better One of the most intense 3D experiences you'll have on your PC Forsaken wastes no time at all dumping you in a room full of droids, missiles, gun emplacements, robots and whizz-bang special effects, and it also features the best combat action and 16-player deathmatch since time began.

Or try: G-Police 1 player ■ Psygnosis ■ Compulsive, hardto-control shooter ***

The Full Wormage ■ Shooter ■ 1-6 players ■ MicroProse ■ budget Wriggly deathmatch
compendium This seems a bit

pointless considering that most people already own a Worm of their own, and this particular compilation of Worms United. Worms 2 and Worms Pinball is rather pricey for a budget offering. Still, if 2D, turn-based, player vs player worm-centred combat tickles your fancy, this is the can of nematodes for you. ★★★

Gangsters Strategy ■ 1-4 players ■ **EIDOS Married to the mob**

This '30s-set mob-'em-up combines the best bits of Sim City and turn-based strategy games with your motley collection of hoods able to go just about anywhere and do almost anything. The controls make things tricky, but the rewarding complexity and sheer look of the thing will keep vou at it. ★★★



Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko ■ Platformer ■ 1 player ■ Ubisoft A 3D gecko i sunglasses. Obviously

Originally debuted on Panasonic's flash-in-the-pan 3DO, the elements are all in place for a good romp: simple controls, variety of levels and sub-quests a-go-go. The bad points are a toss up between the unwieldy camera angles, and Leslie "Carry On" Philip's voice-over – it's a close call. ★★★

The Golf Pro Sports ■ 1 player **■** Empire Interactive Nove

golf sim Uses a new swing system rather than the usual power-bar, which makes play much more difficult initially, though it does simplify with practice. The scenery in both courses, although a pre-rendered cop-out, will make you want to bring a picnic to the game and the ball physics are

superb. *** Or try: Actua Golf 2 ■ 1-4 players Gremlin Interactive ■ Realistic and fun golf simulation.

Grand Theft Auto ■ Crim-'em-up ■ 1 player■ Take 2 Interactive Drugs,

death and driving Notorious for its lack of scruples, encouraging killing bystanders and trafficking of drugs, GTA gives you a sense of freedom as you drive around massive cities. The graphics are disappointing, but the missions are enjoyable, even if repetitive. However, games where failure results in you being plonked back at the start of a level are asking for trouble. ***

Grim Fandango ■ Adventure ■ 1 player ■ LucasArts Death warmed up

The style, presentation and content of this odd, amusing adventure leave it towering headand-shoulders above everything else. The puzzles are very difficult and often obscure, but you'll forgive it for its neat touches. absorbing plot and downright loveliness ****

Half-Life ■ Shooter ■ 1-16 players Sierra The best PC game

ever A stunningly atmospheric first-person shooter built around a believable environment and logical puzzles, as well as including a decent amount of gorgeous allout alien-blasting. The blastable meanies demonstrate mindboggling intelligence, and the narrative is both absorbing and seamlessly interspersed with the action. We like it. **

Hardwar ■ Strategy ■ 1 player ■ Gremlin Interactive Exciting mix of trading and

combat A step in the right direction - this unofficially updates the great 8-bit game Elite for the Labour-driven, Spice Girl-warbling, Sunset Beach-goggling late '90s The environment is enormous, but the gameplay is hampered by too much waiting around and not nough doing. **

Or try: Privateer 2: The Darkening ■ 1 playe ■ Electronic Arts ■ Dark and spooky. ***

Hedz Shooter # 1 player # Hasbro shoot-'em-up Strap heads on

to your alien torso, adopt their attributes and weapons, and proceed to wander-about killing other aliens. Adding to your collection of heads is great, but chasing aliens for keys to open every successive door soon gets tiring and dull. ★★ **Heart of Darkness**

■ Platformer ■ 1 player■ Ocean Visually stunning runabout It was five years in the making and, oh so very nearly

worth the wait. Stretches the 2D platformer out as far as it will go without it snapping straight back and hurting your fingers. The backdrops are beautiful, and there are puzzles a-plenty. ★★★

IF/A-18E: Carrier Strike Fighter Flight sim 1 1 player

■ Interactive Magic Fly planes about Simulating a craft that won't be flying for five years (but based on enough test data to ensure authenticity), for the most part Strike Fighter looks absolutely gorgeous. The missions are varied and convincing, and your success alters what you're offered to do in future levels. Unfortunately, you'll need at least a PII before you can run it properly, though. ***

Interstate 76 ■ Racing ■ 1-8 players ■ Activision '70s retro

challenge Taking its cue from the *Twisted Metal* games, this racer-come-shooter suffers from jerky and simplistic graphics and repetitive gameplay, although you're sure to find plenty of fun in just driving about, and shooting up scenery and other vehicles. The ongoing plot and huge candyfloss afros will satisfy all but the most obsessive '70s-phile. ★★★



Incoming: Lux et Rubor

First-person shooter ■ 1 player ■ Rage Software Fancy, multi-vehicle blaster A real triumph of conventionality over originality, Incoming features every shoot-'em-up cliché known, but the gorgeous visuals, wide variety of vehicles and frenetic finger action prove there's plenty of life in the genre yet. **

Jimmy White's 2: Cueball

■ Sports ■ 2 players ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment Snooker **loopy nuts are we** Superb snooker and pool sim, with a highly playable game engine and wacky darts, draughts and fruit machine sub-games. ***

Or try: Virtua Pool 2 ■ Multi-player ■ Interplay ■ Pool without the celebrity. **

King's Quest: Mask of Eternity RPG 1 1 player Cendant

Third-person RPG-ing A graphically-impressive thirdperson game which attempts to disguise the fact that it's an RPG by employing fancy graphical effects. But the combat statistics-based and requiring you to select appropriate weapons gives its role-playing origins away. and there's a strong traditional object-oriented puzzle element. Approachable, easy to use and fun. ****

Klingon Honor Guard Shooter ■ 1-16 players **■ MicroProse Pasty-hea**

Doom-style exploits This is based on the excellent *Unreal* engine, which automatically makes it beautiful and speedy. A full complement of niggling factors, such as suddenly completing levels without even realising you were anywhere near the end of a mission, are negated by the sheer intensity of the big-weapon shooting action. Those crazy Klingon boys, eh? ★★★

Links LS '99 Sports ■ 1-4 players ■ EIDOS Interactive Golf for it!

The visuals are lovely, as you'd expect, but it takes time to draw the scenery and – predictably – Links uses the same power-bar system as all other golf games. Still, with four courses, eight players at your disposal and 30 modes of play, who's complaining?

Or try: Microsoft Golf 1998

■ Multi-player ■ Microsoft, motion-captured players and dodgy controls. ★★ **Madden NFL 99**

🖩 Sports 🖩 1-4 player 🖪 EA **Sports Oval-shaped ball sim** A proper simulation, with all the options tactics bells and whistles included, and as such only really

"serious" racer. Visually, it makes Niagra Falls look tame. The slow pan away from the glistening and undulating ocean in the intro sequence is enough



recommended to die-hard fans. It looks good, the controls do their controlling sufficiently well, but it's complex and strangely unsatisfying Still, that Madden bloke, eh? Who the hell is he? ***

Magic & Mayhem Strategy ■ 1 player ■ Virgin Interactive Swords and

sorcery in strategy shocker Featuring knights, wizards and all the usual stuff, this real-time strategy gives you a surprisingly uncommon spell-casting, creature-creating environment. The main characters are well-designed, the story effortlessly sucks you in and the 30 maps are varied and realistic enough to make you feel like you're there. ***

MechCommander ■ Strategy ■ 1 player **■** MicroProse Real time

strategy, management and big robots Based on the BattleTech board game, but a strategical step away from the action of previous MechWarrior games, Commander boasts clearly laid-out logistics, intricate detail and superh level design *** Or try: MechWarrior 2 ■ 1 player ■ Activision ■ Huge

hulking exoskeleton robots. **



MicroMachines V3 ■ Racing ■ 1-4 players

■ Codemasters Top-down miniature racing Embrace a world where you race round tabletop tracks in a mini car, boat or ice cream van, preferably against as many other human players as possible. As good on the PC as on any of the consoles. **

Microsoft Combat Flight Simulator
WWII Europe Series
Flight sim
1-4 players

Microsoft You sexy n fokker Fly as any one of a number of lovingly re-created historic planes, with guns a-blazing. The free-flight and quick-combat options cater for arcade fans, while the missions and campaigns will bring a smile to the face of the die-hard plane freak. Not much improved over the original, but still a very fine sim. **

Motorcross Madness 3D ■ Racing ■ 1 player ■ Microsoft Motorbikes and

dirt tracks A huge array of racing modes and more tracks than you can shake a Kawasaki at. Madness offers enough of a racing thrill to deem motorbike racing games worthy of the PC. No twoplayer mode, though. ★★★
Or try: Moto Racer ■ 1-2 players ■ Electronic Arts ■ More

of the same. **

Motorhead Racing Multi-player ■ Gremlin Interactive

Futuristic sports-car visual drooler Nine cars, slick track design, a myriad of tiny road-side animations (like monorails and space craft) and the right difficulty pitch: a cinch to drive, but hard to drive well Fast too ****

Or try: Screamer Rally ■ 1 player ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment. Watch that scenery fly by. ***

NBA Live 98 ■ Sports ■ 1-4 players ■ Electronic Arts Ball in the basket fun Although it is slightly too easy mainly because of the limited computer opposition, NBA Live 98 was never pretending to accurately represent basketball. However, it controls well, looks fantastic and provides a wealth of options, enabling you to tailor the game as you wish. ***

Newman/Haas Racing Racing ■ 1-8 players

■ Psygnosis F1 drive-about Sixteen drivers, 11 full-3D tracks, the pits, smooth and fast racing, and everything else – so what's wrong? The sound is terrible, the crashes a non-event, the visuals have packed up and gone home, and the right-angled corners are someone's idea of a joke. ★★

Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee Platformer ■ 1 player ■ GT

Interactive 2D platforming with puzzling chucked in Budget release of a pointless conversion from the PlayStation, with dated gameplay that involves merely moving your alien from one screen to the next. It's just console fodder, converted for the sake of it - the PC doesn't need this kind of thing. **



Outwars ■ Adventure ■ 1 player

■ Microsoft Starship
Troopers: the (unofficial) game Drop down a lift shaft in an overrun research installation, then try to raise a cargo lift as big as a Quake level. Qutwars innovates. and breathes fresh air into this 3D shoot-'em-up/arcade adventure Quake/Tomb Raider cross-over. The over-zealous sudden-death routines do become irritating,

though. *** Or try: Terra Nova ■ 1-12 player ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment ■ Got a spare brain? You'll need it.

Pandemonium 2 ■ Platformer ■ 1 player ■ Ubisoft **■** budget Deathly

dull running and jumping
It looks like it's in 3D but actually Pandemonium 2 is 2D in a very cunning disguise, so that your path is tediously restricted to one route. The characters are irritating, the cut-scenes crop up far too often and the running and jumping action is at least ten years out of date. ***

Player Manager 2 Extra: Chase For Glory ■ Sports ■ 1 player ■ Sold Out ■ budget Tedious football coachmanship

Suffers the same fate as all management games that try to shoe-horn in an arcade section the boardroom bits are slow and tedious, and the pitch parts look terrible and aren't exciting in the slightest. The Man City of management games. *

Pod Gold ■ Racing ■ 1-8 players ■
Ubisoft ■ budget Futuristic racing... again The circuits are designed to make life as difficult as possible, with dead-ends and intersections causing more crashes than you will be able to find swear-words for. Plenty of tracks

and vehicles, a multi-player option

and at a budget price it's not to be

sniffed at. ***

Populous: The Beginning Strategy ■ 1 player
■ Electronic Arts Try your

hand at omnipotence You're God! Build huts, breed warriors and braves, get new spells to alter the land, fight and conquer enemies, and all that. Essentially the original game all over again, but it's a lot easier this time and, of course, it's all gone 3D. Feel the depth and the intelligent learning curve, and you'll be playing for hours. ** Or try: Riverworld ■ 1 player ■ Cryo ■ Time-warping real-time

Powerboat Racing ■ Racing ■ Multi-player

■ Interplay Watersports
Close inspection of Miami Vice and James Bond will tell you that speedboats are cool. Thanks to clumsy, blocky, jerky visuals and stunted gameplay, PowerBoat Racing is not. *

Or try: MotorHead ■ 1-2 player ■ Gremlin Interactive ■ Futuristic, speedy, gorgeous. ★★★

Powerslide ■ Racing ■ 1-8 players ■ GT Interactive Rough terrain

driving Looking lovely and moving like a gerbil on speed, this racer takes in courses set in places like deserts, city walls and mineshafts. But despite the cars. reacting realistically to the terrain, it can become frustrating and the relatively short length of the championships means that you won't get endless entertainment from this one. ***



Premier Manager '98 Sports manager ■ 1 player **■** Gremlin Interactive

All dressed up but nowhere to go - there's an accurate database update, but the imperfections that bugged PM's previous incarnation remain and now stick out further than Jimmy Hill's chin. Still, it's only 20 nicker. ***

Pro Pinball: Timeshock! Pinball ■ 1 player ■ GT

Interactive It's a pinball game Only one table? Once the shock of this has worn off, the perfect ball physics and over-thetop range of flashing lights, bells and whistles will keep silver-balled fans happy for months. ***

Or try: Pinball Soccer

■ 1 player ■ Pin-Ball Games ■ More themed pinball. ★★

Prost Grand Prix

■ Racing ■ 1 player ■ Infogrames Variable F1 sim An okay F1 sim, with a discrepancy in the difficulty levels that has you driving like a member of the McLaren team when you have the automatic gears and brakes turned on, and like that woman from Driving School when they're

Or try: Grand Prix 2 1 player ■ MicroProse ■ Geoff Crammond's absurdly accurate F1 sim. ★★★

Quake II ■ First-person shooter ■ 1-infinite players
■ Activision Seminal first-

person baddie-beater Basically more of the same, but that's more of one of the finest games in the world. Quake II is undoubtedly best played over a network or on the Internet, and offers bigger, better (although not

cleverer) monsters, massive guns improved level designs and a fully customisable game engine.

Or try: Rebel Moon Rising ■ 1-4 players ■ GT Interactive ■ Ugly and boring, unusual voice control option. *

Railroad Tycoon II

Strategy 11-16 players 11 Take 2 Thermos-'em-up

A great improvement on the classic original, with financial management and train direction given more of an emphasis at the expense of tedious railway construction. There's a potful of time zones and trains to play with, and the range of options leaves you with scope to customise the game to your choosing. Chuffing

Rainbow Six Strategy ■ 1-16 players ■ Red Storm Stealthy first-person hostage action

Starring SAS-style combat heroes, this is a third-person shooter set in real-life terrorist situations. The healthy dose of realism works well and the overwhelming amount of strategy makes it more cerebral than your usual shoot-'em-up. A shame, then, that your highly trained team-mates often act like idiots. ***

Ring

Adventure ■ 1 player ■ Cryo Opera-based ad believe it or not With Wagner playing constantly and different worlds throwing up characters who are often wont to sing at you, Ring is a little bit different. It looks gorgeous, it's utterly mad, but at the end of the day it's the same set of adventure-style puzzles as every other adventure title. **

Rival Realms ■ Strategy ■ 1-8 players ■ Titus Swords and sorcery

A reasonably happy marriage of real-time strategy and role-playing The usual "send your wizards into battle to die" scenario has been coupled with characters whose skills extend over time, making them gradually more valuable than the usual RTS fodder. Unfortunately, the fiddly controls and lack of general character intelligence messes it up a tad. **

Roland Garros 1998: The French Open ■ Sports ■ 1-4 players **■** Grolier Interactive

Accurate tennis sim Garros's great strength (making sure you have complete control over where the ball will land as you hit it) is also its weakness (making it far too easy to beat the computer opponents). There are 50 players, each of the four courts look lovely and, despite the limited options and near-invisible ball, you'll be "love-ing" this one. **

Sentinel Returns ■ Puzzler ■ 1 player ■ Puzzier ■ 1 player
■ Psygnosis One of the
most original puzzle games ever An 8-bit classic. Sentinel was the most bizarre concept for

a game: absorbing trees around a 3D landscape, while avoiding the gaze of the Sentinel at the top. Just don't expect to be quite so amazed second time around.

Shogo: Mobile **Armour Division** ■ Shooter ■ 1-16 players ■ Microids Big robots

shooting A first-person shooter distinguished by its Japanese, animé stylings and the opportunity to dress up as a massive robot. Getting about in a hulking great metal suit is easier than you'd think and the striking visuals perfectly complement the intelligent leve

design. Not a very big game, but a good 'un ***

Sid Meier's **Gettysburg!** ■ Strategy ■ 1-8 players

■ EA Classics Re-live obsc American battles Sid Meier turns out another historically accurate, yet genuinely fun. real time strategy game. Here you get to take control of either side in the American Civil War and you get equal measures of both good. head-hurting strategy and all-out shooting action. ***

■ Shooter ■ 1-16 players ■

Activision Traditi shooting action Effectively the culmination of years of first-person shooters. The graphical feel and engine of Quake II, the mission style and gorgeous sniper rifle from GoldenEye, and the speech and big guns from *Duke Nukem*. Unfortunately, *Half-Life*'s gone and done it all better, making Sin look distinctly old hat already. **

Spec Ops: Rangers Lead the Way

■ Strategy ■ 1 player ■ Gametek First-person war sim Complete five separate missions where stealth and the need to learn tactics are vital. The graphics and Al are top-notch and the ability to control two men via one set of controls is innovative though it doesn't always work You will need a high-spec PC and graphics acceleration. **

StarCraft

■ Strategy ■ Multi-player ■ Blizzard Entertainment **Real-time strategy** The same mix of building, research, resource management and combat as its prequel, but with enough intricacy and sidesteps to inject life into the

Starship Titanic ■ Adventure ■ 1 player ■ Zablac Entertainment

Douglas Adams' foray into adventure gaming Co-written by Mr Hitchhiker himself, Titanic is a text-driven adventure that actually works. It's witty, logical and engaging, if just a tiny bit frustrating at times. And it's got Terry Jones. ★★★

Star Trek Federation Compilation ■ Compilation ■ 1 player ■ Interplay | budget It's a

compilation, Jim Ignore the Next Generation titles, enjoy the 25th Anniversary title for the self-indulgent fun that it is and then concentrate your efforts on Star Fleet Academy, which provides you with the opportunity to sit in the Captain's chair and pilot yourself around the galaxy. May the force be with you! Oh, bugger... wrong film. ***

Star Wars: Supremacy ■ Strategy ■ 1 player Write your own plot Set

in a time after the destruction of the original Death Star, Supremacy gives you the chance to command the entire Rebel Alliance or Empire and re-write Star Wars history. An R2-D2-with-the-top-removedsized bin full of strategies gets the thumbs up, but the over-complex gameplay may deter. **

Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream ■ Beat-'em-up ■ 1-2 players ■ Virgin Interactive

Entertainment The nth version of the world's most **famous fighting game** More coin-op-to-PC shenanigans, with manga-style graphics, lots of new characters and Super Combos. Ken's hair seems to have grown a bit, too. Or maybe he's just had it styled ***

Team Apache ■ Flight sim ■ 1 player

■ Mindscape Convincing chopper sim Few other flight sims introduce the novice in such a friendly way, before proceeding to let all hell break loose around them in such terrifyingly convincing fashion, Recommended, *** Or try: Total Air War ■ Multiplayer ■ DiD/Ocean ■ Hey you! Up in the sky. ★★★★

Theme Hospital Strategy 1 player EA Classics Ailment-based real-time strategy Assume the role of hospital manager, in a quest to build the perfect emergency ward and cure your patients of their comedy illnesses. Interesting at

first, but gradually becomes more and more repetitive until you'll have had enough. Also, it just isn't funny. ***

Thief: The Dark **Project**

■ Sneak-'em-up ■ 1 player ■ FIDOS Medies up A first-person shooter with all the brazen room-crashing and gun-toting taken out, and replaced with Metal Gear Solid-style sneakiness and tip-toeing. Unlike MGS, the absence of all-out action has dealt the interest level a blow,

absorbing. For a while. ★★★ **TOCA Touring Car** Championship
■ Driver ■ 1-8 players

but it's still atmospheric and

■ Codemasters Realistic car handling With a series of cars that handle look and even sound different, and a level of accuracy in the tracks and stats maintained to the finest degree, TOCA Touring Car would be a truly essential purchase even without the realistic graphics. It's racing at its finest -

why don't you own it? ★★★
Or try: Test Drive 4 ■ 1-4 ayers ■ Electronic Arts ■ Fast but boring. **

Tomb Raider III Puzzle ■ 1 player ■ EIDOS Interactive The intelligent

girl with the gun is back A tendency toward sudden death. coupled with the same inadequate controls and frustrating, difficult puzzles. But it's Tomb Raider! You get intelligent level design. Gobsmackingly gorgeous graphics. And this time, there're pathways to choose from to help keep you up all night with Lara. *

Total Annihilation Strategy ■ 1-8 player ■ GT Replay Futuristic strategy nonsense More intense than your Command & Conquers and the like, and as easy to use as an inflatable sheep. This manages to be easy for beginners and yet challenging for experts, the battles are great and there're plenty of patches and additions available on the Web, too. Buy this or feel

Trespasser ■ Shooter ■ 1 player **■** Electronic Arts

stupid ***

Disappointing dino shooterEA has relied on the brilliantly realised real-world physics, but this is just not enough. The innovative new control system – where you interact with the game world through the character's arm makes moving about and hitting the dino boys trickier than it should be. Plodding, tedious, confusing and no fun at all. *

Triple Play 99
■ Sports ■ 1-4 pl 4 players **■** Electronic Arts Baseball for the fans Baseball isn't the most exciting sport in the known



PC

universe, so we commend *TP '99* for doing a fine job of translating it for the PC. With the option of just a single game or a complete 170-game tournament, Internet games and absolutely loads of players and stadiums to choose from, this is the simulation of choice for batfans. ****



The X-Files
Adventure 1 player
Fox Interactive Spooky
cash-in tie-in? Sounds like a
case for Mulder and Scully
It may just be a pile of video clips
stuck together with VirtualCinema
glue, but the seven weeks of
exclusive filming, FBI notebookfull of trainspotter references and
relative freedom of movement
elevate the X-Files above the
standard of most point-and-click
adventures. ***

Or try: Blade Runner
■ 1 player ■ Virgin Interactive
Entertainment ■ More film tie-in
shenanigans. ★★★★

UFO: Enemy
Unknown
■ Strategy ■ 1 player ■ Sold
Out ■ Budget Alien-filled
brain-tickler Turn-based combat
from the boys who invented
Spectrum classics Chaos and
Rebelstar. It might not look good,
but the X-Files-style investigate-

the-aliens plot is very complex, exhaustive and easy to get sucked into, thanks largely to the easy-to-use controls and interface. ***

Ultima Collection

■ RPG compilation ■ Player numbers vary ■ Electronic Arts Seminal titles collected Bringing together *Ultima* games from the last 20-or-so years, and presenting ten games from the series in the process, this collection suffers the same fate as most retro groupings; yesterday's faves are, in reality, quite dull compared to today's delights. Criminally omits a couple of games (like *Ultima Underworiol*). The shamel ★★★



Unreal
■ First-person shooter
■ Multi-player ■ GT

■ Multi-player ■ GT Interactive Doom clonetastic This has to be the fastest, most enjoyable Doom clone available for the PC to date. It's completely packed with luscious scripted moments, a fully pumped-up atmosphere, strictly intelligent denizens and enough eye candy to rot your lashes. The slightly poor weapons do sometimes give the feeling that you are defending your corner with nothing more dangerous than a pair of curling tongs, but with newities such as the simulated deathmatch for those who don't know a modem from a moped, Unreal deserves all the attention that you can possibly

Urban Assault

■ Strategy ■ 1 player
■ Microsoft Post-nuclear
skirmish Battle alien scum in an
adventure marred ever-so slightly
by blurred textures, thin walls and
some sharply polygonal structures

Or try: BattleZone ■ 1-2
players ■ Activision ■ Boardgamebased strategy. ★★★★

Wargasm
■ Strategy ■ 1-16 players ■ Infogrames Ultra-realistic war sim With graphics that'll make your family think you've taken to watching non-stop videos of the Gulf War, and the option to control battles from the squaddies' boots or the commander's throne, Wargasm is a breath-takingly comprehensive death-'em-up. It's let down by your soldiers biting the big one if you leave them alone for a second, but it's so easy to control that you just won't care about this. ** * * * **

Wetrix
■ Puzzler ■ 1 player ■

■ Puzzler ■ 1 player ■ Ocean Tetris meets Populous You need to position the falling blocks on to a landscape to contain the water that rains down. Fun, but over-complicated. ★★★★

Or try: Super Puzzle Fighter
2 Turbo ■ 1-2 player ■ Virgin
Interactive Entertainment ■ Great
title, great game. ★★★

World Cup 98

■ Sports ■ 1-20 player

■ Electronic Arts Licensed kickabout Judged by graphics and licensing (as football games often are), this one wins hands down. But, while improving a little on Road to the World Cup, it also enables you to play smooth and exciting games (with or without the easy-to-pull-off fancy moves),

and there is even a limited strategy

Or try: World League Soccer
'98 ■ 1-4 players ■ EIDOS
Interactive ■ Unremarkable soccer
sim. ★★★

World of Combat 2000

■ Simulation ■ 1-100 players
■ Novalogic ■ Budget
■ Real-world combat sim

■ Real-world combat sim
Fancy getting your hands on a
military helicopter, jet fighter or
tank? Of course you do, and this is
the compilation for you. They're all
based on genuine military specs,
and the controls are easy enough
to catter for you if you're just
beginning, yet complex enough of
you're an expert. The visuals suffer
slightly, but that doesn't matter a
jot. ★★★★★



X-COM: Interceptor

Space strategy 1 player

MicroProse Latest in the
long line The combination of
real-time strategy and 3D action
is perfected just as smoothly and
effectively as the mix of strategy
and tactical infantry combat in
the other games. And the result?
Another corker. ** ** **
Or try: X-COM: Apocalypse

1-2 player MicroProse 1 The

N64

prequel. ***

1080° Snowboarding
Racing ■ 1-4 players
■ Nintendo It's a snow-

boarding game The Wave Race team does it again, with a brilliant range of modes, plenty of tricks to pull off, loads of boards and loads of courses for you to have a crack at. As well as looking absolutely gorgeous, this snow-bound board sim offers beautiful controls and brilliant replays, and the stunts are suitably difficult to complete.

All Star Baseball
■ Sports ■ 1-4 players
■ Acclaim Entertainment

Realistic bat-on-ball action
Makes simple baseball seem like a
beautiful sport, with smoothlooking players and gorgeous
backgrounds. It's much more of a
simulation than other titles, and so
a lot more thoughtful and challenging as a result. This, coupled
with the range of stats and
options, means wide smiles all
round for baseball fans. *****

Banjo-Kazooie
■ 3D platformer ■ 1 player
■ Nintendo/Rare Bizarre
bear-bird crossover With
beautiful levels that beg you
to explore them, and genuine
challenge and variety provided
by the occasional transformation

beautiful levels that beg you to explore them, and genuine challenge and variety provided by the occasional transformation into other animals, this very nearly knocks cocky old Mario off his perch. And it's the first Rare game not to include an eye-wincing amount of cute. * * * * * *

Bio Freaks
■ Fighting ■ 1-4 players
■ GT Interactive/Midway

Arm.-attachment beat-'emup Watch out for massive missie attacks and arms flying off all over the place, but beware the gimmicky up-in-the-air jet-pac bit that manages to detract from the main game. There are plenty of characters and moves, everything looks lovely and there's loads of gore, but sadly it just won't light vour fire. ★★★

Or try: Clayfighter 63 1/3

■ 1-2 players ■ Interplay ■
Alleged comedy beat-'em-up. ★

Blast Corps
■ Destruct-'em-up
■ 1 player ■ Nintendo/Rare

smashing A truly unique game (the closest comparison must be oldie Rampage). And indeed, knocking down buildings with a great range of vehicles is as much fun as it sounds. Initially the mass destruction is too easy, but the additional goals will soon have you tearing hair out from all over your body. Yes... even there. * * * * * *

Body Harvest
RPG/shooter 1 player
Gremlin Interactive Bugblasting, B-movie invasion;
lots of aliens Loads of weapons,
100 vehicles to drive around in and
five varied levels single out this
interesting blaster. The graphics are
ropey, and the character dialogue
terrible, but the mix of RPG and
intense, panicky alien shooting
works a treat and it's so big you'll
get lost more often than you'd

Bomberman 64
■ 3D platformer ■ 1-4
players ■ Nintendo

expect. ***

Infamous multi-playering antics Hudson finally loses its knack of pumping out great Bomberman games. The pure fun that made the multi-player game a classic is in tatters and the one-player is like Mario 64 with all its good bits − like the controls and variety − thrown in the bin. Steer well clear ★ ★

Buck Bumble

■ Shooter ■ 1-2 players
■ Ubisoft Honey-bee based shooting Mission-based shooter with puzzle elements. There's a varied bunch of enemies, but the levels themselves aren't involving, and the boring looks and copious fogging effects make you feel that a limited amount of thought has been put into this offering. ★★★

Bust-A-Move 3 DX n Puzzle ■ 1-4 players ■ Acclaim Multi-coloured

spherical fun So very simple, and yet so utterly absorbing, this bubble-bursting sequel wipes the floor with most other puzzlers. There's a new four-player mode, and a ton of other options and challenges, although the story mode is a smidgeon too easy. It's not for everyone, but if you like popping coloured spheres and listening to the screams of crazy Japanese characters, you can't go

Or try: Bust-A-Move 2 ■ 1-2 players ■ Acclaim Entertainment ■ Addictive bubble-matching puzzler. ★★★★

Diddy Kong Racing
■ Racing ■ 1-4 players
■ Nintendo/Rare Comedy

animal karting Very nearly laps Mario Kart with its more complex and inventive one-player game and superb graphics, but the multiplayer option is duller than a dull thing on a very dull day. And those super-cute characters – ugh! Take them away, they're bringing us out in a rash. *****

F1 World Grand Prix
Racing ■ 1-2 players

■ Nintendo Fancy yourself as Damon Hill? Looking as good as the real thing, with all the real cars, drivers, stats and loads of other nonsense. There're plenty of modes, too, whether your an arcade racer or true F1 fan, and the two-player mode rounds off the whole gorgeous package. "Let's see that again!" *****

Fighters Destiny
Fighter 1-2 players
Ocean Laydeez and-ah
gentlemen, we present the
world's best N64 fighter...
Well-defined characters and plenty
of moves make this, by default, the
N64's Tekken. As with so many
N64 games, it's too easy, but the
excellent range of challenges
ensures longevity. Brilliant speech,
too. ****

F-Zero X
Racing ■ 1-4 players
■ Nintendo Quick-as-youlike space-age racer The
fastest, smoothest racer in the
whole wide world, largely thanks
to a loss of graphical detail. The
controls are sublime, the handling
fantastic and the tracks horrifically
difficult. The over-steep learning
curve and cheating computer
opponents spoil the experience a
bit. But don't worry too much
about that ****



GoldenEye 007
■ First-person shooter ■ 1-4
players ■ Nintendo/Rare
The world's first spy sim The
game that causes little green lights
to appear in the eyes of PC and
PlayStation owners. A believable
and immersive 3D world, with 20
challenging missions taking you
from a snow-covered wasteland
to the mens' toilets. Four difficulty
levels from Agent to 007, and the
best multi-player game money
can buy if you ever get bored of
1-player. Plus it's got James Bond

Gex 64: Enter the Gecko
Platformer ■ 1 player ■ GT
Interactive Rubbish reptilian
roam-about Astonishingly
simplistic platformer that proves
far too linear. The camera hasn't a
clue what it should be centring on,
the graphics are laughable and the
animation and level design have
been devised by monkeys. Worst
of all, it tries to be funny. Sigh. ★

in it. And Robbie Coltrane. And

Sean Bean... * * * *

ISS '98
■ Sports ■ 1-4 players
■ Konami Beautiful goalmouth adventures Almost
identical to the original *ISS* 64, and
so you get the same silky controls
and wealth of options, which mean
beautifully smooth football. There
are lots of subtle improvements –

are lots of subtle improvements the referee is always on the pitch and it's this, coupled with new camera angles, new kicks and better crosses and headers, that make it an essential purchase. Again. ★★★

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time ■ RPG ■ 1 player ■ Nintendo The best game in the world

ever You can't write the word "Miyamoto" without following it up with "has created another masterpiece" – it's in the rules. Keeping all the traditional Zelda hallmarks and wrapping them up in a beautifully realised 3D world, this platformy RPG is worth buying an N64 for. The wandering about, talking, fighting and cut-scenes have been tweaked and finetuned until they're perfect. An absolute marvel. ** ***

Lylat Wars
Shooter 1-4 players
Nintendo Animal Magic in
space Loosely based on the
SNES's Starwing, and intended to

STAB IN THE BACK

Monty Con

Utopia's Montezuma's Return for PC really is a pile of crap.



■ Updates of old classics are nothing new. R-Type, Bubble Bobble, Asteroids and a host of others have successfully been given a makeover, mainly because the original games met the two golden retro requirements: One, they were truly memorable. Two, they were good. Sadly, Utopia picked a game that's neither.

The original Atari VCS

Montezuma's Revenge
hardly lit up the gaming
world, and yet it's been
unwisely bundled with this
new version, as though the

caves and dungeons in yet
more detail. The odd flam
or ladder livens things up
from time to time, but
otherwise the faux-Aztec
environment struggles to

developer is boasting, "See how Utopia has updated this classic!" Sadly, the only boast the company should be making is, "See how this tedious 15-year-old original is vastly more entertaining than Utopia's dull tripe!"

Rather than retain Max Montezuma's 2D charms, Utopia has chosen to show his world in first-person 3D, bringing home the bland caves and dungeons in yet more detail. The odd flame or ladder livens things up from time to time, but otherwise the faux-Aztec produce anything more exciting than a particularly vibrant shade of brown.

You needn't fret about the graphics, though, as you'll spend most of the game flat against a wall or staring at the floor. Max is subject to an inertia usually reserved for the Mir Space Station, and slips and slides about like an intoxicated penguin. Any attempts to smack up the wandering Aztec warriors usually results in an embarrassing sprint right past them and off the nearest diff-edge.

To complete this sad story, Utopia has offered the kind of puzzles that went out of fashion with the Rubik's Cube. With the only obstruction being the odd bat or weedy boss, play quickly becomes a trek to find the next key or switch, which opens up a door to the next identical-looking dungeon.

After Monty's Revenge and Return, here's to the next instalment being Montezuma's Retirement.



be a truly immersive movie-like experience, with cut-scenes that ape films like Independence Day. It's too easy, and it would have been nice to have a level select but it's still addictive, well-crafted and frantic. ****

Madden 64 ■ Sports ■ 1-4 players ■ EA Sports American footb

series update Looks a little sparse, especially without the official logos that Quarterback Club offers, but the controls and game mechanics are so intuitive that for the first time you'll feel like you actually understand what's going on. Hut! Hut! Hut! Or something. **

Mario Kart 64 ■ Racer ■ 1-4 players

■ Nintendo Ol' Mario takes
to the racetrack The original comedy racer returns. The one-player game is a lonely experience, especially when you're up against the cheating computer karts, but the time-trial mode adds longevity, and the great multi-player game is arguably the best that's available on any platform. ***

Mission: Impossible ■ Spy sim ■ 1 player ■ Infogrames Tom Cruise in

mahout Not had looking, with great ideas (such as disguising yourself as other characters in order to progress through the story) that should've turned this 3D stealth-'em-up in to a potential GoldenEve-beater Sadly, however, it's turned out a little bland ++

Mortal Kombat 4 Fighting 1-2 players

■ GT Interactive Mad, bad ood-filled fist fight The Mortal Kombat series has become synonymous with fighting that's simplistic but faster than its rivals and number four is no exception. It's a whole load of fun and the 3D looks good, while keeping up an amusingly frantic pace. It's a bit too easy to pull off complicated moves and there's no innovation. but this is still a laugh-a-minute fighter ***

Or try: MK Mythologies ■ 1 player ■ GT Interactive

Beat-'em-up/RPG marriage. ★



Mystical Ninja RPG 1 1 player Konami

Surreal adventure with a blue-haired maniac More of an RPG-platform game than anything the fundamental unfolding of the story is coupled with a range of *Mario*-style platforming tasks, and is all the better for it. Ninja is mammoth, and the only real downer here is that once you've completed it, you're not likely to return to it. ★★★

NRA Jam '99 ■ Sports ■ 1-4 players ■

Acclaim Option-heavy basketball sim Smacking a ball into a net isn't quite as much fun as in Nintendo's Courtside, but it looks good, plays fast and contains enough options to enable you to shape the game to your exact requirements. It's dead tricky defending, in particular, is a nightmare – but a sports game that's realistically difficult is a refreshing change. *** Or try: Kobe Bryant in NBA Courtside ■ 1-4 players

■ Nintendo ■ Great basketball



Quake 64 First-person shooter ■ 1-2 players ■ GT

Interactive PC own less to laugh about Nothing wrong with this version, but with no more than two players able to take part at any one time, the multi-playering that made the original such great fun is now taking rather a back seat to the monotonous one-player game. And 2D enemies? Please, put us out of our misery now. ***

Rakuga Kids Fighting 1-2 players

Konami Pastel-based punch-'em-up As a host of 2D graffiti monsters lay into one another, you'd be forgiven for thinking that Konami has lost the plot. But the fighting that you'll discover hiding underneath these crayoned crazies is surprisingly solid, even if it's often rather difficult to work out whether you've made contact. There's lots to do, and it's brilliantly cute and cuddly. ***

S.C.A.R.S ■ Driving ■ 1-4 players ■
Ubisoft Rough-terrain racing

Ubisoft's attempt to bring us a Mario Kart without the cutesy characters is partly successful. The handling of the vehicles doesn't feel right, but the developer has ably minimised the fogging, and there are the usual assortment of tracks and weapons to keep you occupied. Even the multi-player is above average, so cautious pats on the back all round **

Snowboard Kids ■ Racing ■ 1-4 players

■ Nintendo *Mario Kart* for the snowboard generation This looks, sounds and plays very simplistically, but its packed full of fun and liable to make you a load of new friends if you show them the multi-player game. The one-player game is challenging, if only for the games you get to play against the computer boarders, who have some kind of 2001-style hatred of humans. **

South Park Shooter 1-4 players

Acclaim Oh My God! It's rubbish! This TV-based firstperson shooter is a particularly cynical cash-in at the expense of fans of the show. There's no variety in the characters you meet the levels are tediously similar and nothing really happens. The speech and graphics are top notch, and the scenery isn't bad, but at heart this is the N64's least interesting shoot-'em-up. **

Spacestation: Silicon Valley Puzzle ■ 1 player ■ Take 2 Interactive Animal-control puzzler (with nasty side) Kill animals and take control of them to solve tricky puzzles. Graphics do their job well, the controls and puzzles are great, and the

attention to detail is second to none. Inevitably, though, since it's a

3D game, you should expect some

trouble from the camera. ***

Starshot: Space Circus Fever Platformer 1 1 player

■ Infogrames Weird French
3D platformer As usual with 3D games, the unwieldy camera and over-fiddly controls are present and correct. Aside from that, the levels are large and the graphics

almost too intricate but there's too much wandering between one place and the next, and the necessary between-platform jumping isn't helped by those



Super Mario 64 ■ 3D platformer ■ 1 player ■ Nintendo If you only buy one game this century

The gold standard by which all videogames are judged. It was the first true 3D platformer for a brand new console, with the reputation of the world's number one game character at stake, and it's a total masterpiece. Huge levels, sublime controls and totally immersive gameplay. **

Turok 2 Shooter ■ 1-4 players ■ Acclaim Entertainment

Make dinosaurs extinct (just one more time) Even without the addition of the 4Mb RAM Pak, this looks stunning, and the game itself is helped by impossibly large guns and no more of the precision jumping nonsense that marred its prequel. The tasks will appear slightly familiar if you're already a fan of *Doom*, and the difficulty is sometimes off the scale, but otherwise this is fan-bloody-tastic

Or try: Turok: Dinosaur **Hunter** ■ 1 player ■ Acclaim Entertainment ■ Make dinosaurs extinct once more. ★★★



V-Rally 99 ■ Driving ■ 1-2 players ■ Infogrames Roads, revs

and racers With your car skidding about and flipping into the trees if you don't use the brake, V-Rally is a tricky game, which makes it difficult to learn but pleasing to master. There's a wealth of challenges if you're willing to persevere, and the graphics and velocity are adequate, not outstanding. Still, it's a decent N64 racer, so not to be sniffed at. ★★★★

Or try: Top Gear Rally 11-2 players ■ Nintendo ■ The best real-car racer on the N64 ***

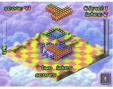
Wayne Gretsky 3D Hockey '98 ■ Sports ■ 1-4 players **■ GT Interactive Updated**

version of original ice hockey sim Fast and smooth enough to make for an accurate interpretation of the too-quickto-watch sport, but you need to persevere if you want to feel like you're actually taking control, and there's a distinct lack of challenge from the N64 opponents. ***

WCW vs NWO Revenge
Sports 1-4 players THQ sy blokes at it aga

A largely unimproved update of WCW/NOW World Tour, its main claim to fame being a slew of upto-date grapplers. The graphics have been slightly improved, and it moves a lot quicker than its predecessor, but it's too easy to get to the end, despite the individual matches being far too

long. Satisfying for a while, but ultimately very samey. **



Wetrix

■ Puzzler ■ 1-2 players

■ Ocean Build lakes and fry 'em with fireballs Much more of a successor to Tetris than it is to Tetrisphere, Initially as difficult as hell, but stick with it and the clear - if rather limited - tactics become obvious. A Tetris-like addiction will then take control of your life, and make your pets leave home.

WipEout 64 ■ Driving ■ 1-4 players ■

Midway Funky futuristic face-flapper This conversion of the PlayStation's seminal racer seems perfectly suited to the Nintendo's analogue controller helping to lessen the steep learning curve it offers. Plenty of weapons and sumptuous graphics are on offer, but the vehicles still feel floaty and temperamental, and there're better space-age racing games available for the N64.

World Cup '98 ■ Sports ■ 1-4 players
■ EA Sports A football game with a big cock on the box The FIFA license and dear old Des

Lynam make this the public's choice, but the sluggish controls and disappointing visuals mean you'll be left with a sense of bitter disappointment – not unlike that experienced by avid England supporters after this year's World Cup. And the one in 1990. ★★★

WWF Warzone ■ Sports ■ 1-4 players ■ Acclaim Entertainment

Leotard-tastic Looks good, but boring in one-player – there are only so many times that kicking someone in the smalls is amusing (once). But get your wrestling-loving mates to join in (if you can find any), and you can enjoy four-men-on-the-floor action. A novel create-a-player section rounds it

XG2: Extreme G 2 ■ Driving ■ 1-4 players■ Acclaim Space-age

motorbike sequel Iguana hasn't done much to improve on the faults of the original – you never feel completely in control, and the frame rate still dips dangerously low. It's a visual and aural treat, but as you crash into the 15th barrier in a row and flip to face the oncoming traffic, you'll start to feel cheated. Persevere and there are rewards - just not enough. ★★★

Game Boy

Cool Hand (Color) Card games 1 player ■ Take 2 Interactive It's a

load of card games, innit? Blackjack, solitaire and cribbage in one package, and the option to play to any country's rules. The graphics are nice enough, and the games are extensive, but isn't a pack of cards far cheaper? **

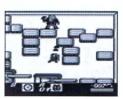
Donkey Kong Land II: Diddy Kong's Quest ■ Platformer ■ 1 player

■ Nintendo Mini mon stories Tries hard to squeeze the SNES version into the tiny grey handheld and doesn't do too

badly The visuals are difficult to make out occasionally, thanks to their complexity, but the controls and wealth of secrets make it a worthy Mario-style jump-about.

Game & Watch Gallery ■ Compilation ■ 1 player

■ Nintendo Four titles ir one Featuring Fire, Manhole, Octopus and Oil Panic, these games offer simple fun, having been transcribed faithfully from the original handheld wonders. There's a museum section, too. but – let's be honest here weren't Game & Watches always a bit rubbish? ★★★



James Bond 007 RPG Nintendo 1 player

aken or stirred? Nothing remarkably innovative about this top-down Game Boy RPG, but it's nice to see one set in the modern world, even if it is a tad simple. The sparse mazes that form the levels are rather short and somewhat disappointing, but the tough endof-level bosses and emphasis on sneaking about means this gets 004 stars. ***

Legend of Zelda IV: Link's Awakening RPG Nintendo

■ 1 player The endearing elf in B&W A truly involving plot, coupled with beautiful graphics (including plenty of cut-scenes) and a story where the emphasis is on engaging the player in the same way as FFVII. It's incredibly difficult, with a vast range of interesting challenges – can Zelda do no wrong? ****

Montezuma's Return (Color) Platformer ■ 1 player ■ Take 2 Unknown quantity,

Max, returns A little character jumping about, climbing ladders and collecting keys, just like the old days. The graphics are lovely, and it controls well enough over the numerous levels, but the '80s design and fall-too-far-and-die feature will have you chucking your Boy through a window. ★★

Mortal Kombat 4 Fighting III 1 player III

Midway Disappointing fight-'em-up Whereas the next generation machines have been enjoying the latest 3D versions of this long-running bloody beat-'em-up series, sadly the Game Boy's been landed with the old-style jerky feel that belongs to the very first instalment. And no blood? What's the point? ★

Or try: Street Fighter II ■ Nintendo ■ 1 player ■ Classic small-scale beat-'em-up. ★★★

NFL Blitz ■ 1 player ■ Midway Arcadestyle US football With only seven players per side and no penalties permitted, this is a fast n' furious interpretation of nobody's favourite sport. The game you'll find underneath isn't too bad, and there's a surprising depth to the tactics and playcalling, but – incredibly – the players suffer from the early-'80s problem of "flicker", which makes

tracking them impossible. ** Power Quest (Color) Fighter ■ 1-2 players
■ Sunsoft Odd RPG/f mixture Lots of talking and

shops, just like in an RPG, but at heart it's a pure beat-'em-up. The ability to upgrade yer robot fighter is a welcome addition and the fighting has a bit more depth than some of the usual Game Boy examples. It's a bit different, but generally only okay. **

Rampage World Tour ■ Arcade action ■ 1-2
players ■ Midway The classic

smash-'em-up updated Every small boy's dream come true – control King Kong, Wolfman or Godzilla and smash up buildings. Unfortunately, that's it, and it isn't helped by the jerky animation and frankly boring graphics. Sadly, boys, it turns out that knocking skyscrapers down all day isn't as much fun as it sounds.

Super Mario Land

■ Platformer ■ 1 player ■ Nintendo The pipe man cometh One of the Game Boy's original release games, and Super Mario still excels in most areas despite its advanced nine years The graphics are simple, but the subtlety of control and excellent level designs have been carried over to the bijou Nintendo with aplomb ****

Or try: Super Mario Land II ■ 1 player ■ Nintendo ■ More but with little originality. **

Tennis
Sports ■ 1-2 players ■ Nintendo Racquet fun

Despite its simplicity. Tennis is one of the most enjoyable such sims on any platform. With an addictive two-player option, a hard-to-beat computer player and some very intuitive controls, this is a great game if you want to avoid real-life John McEnroe-style ill-placedabuse nonsense. * * * *

Tetris DX ■ Puzzler ■ 1-2 players ■ Nintendo E GB Color Brick

drop return shock! The graphics, sounds and modes might have changed a little, but this is still the same old Game Boy *Tetris*, renowned worldwide as the most addictive version of the Russian puzzler. Stemming the rising wall of bricks is, in fact, all the better for being able to save your high scores at long last, but sadly the game doesn't work too well in black and white ****

Turok ■ Platformer ■ 1 player Acclaim Entertainment

Dinky dinosaur hunt Absolutely massive, and the high difficulty should prevent you from seeing the end sequence for quite a while, if ever. However, the quite shocking lack of game originality – nabbing bits from platformers left, right and centre, and dressing them up in fancy graphics – counts against it, as does its lack of fresh challenges per level. ★★★

Wave Race ■ Racing ■ 1-4 players

■ Nintendo Original jet ski sim This doesn't quite reach the standards of the N64 version with small, top-down 2D graphics. It's near-impossible to beat the CPU opponents, but the controls are as intuitive as the N64 incarnation and there are plenty of tracks to race on You can't argue with a four-player mode, either. **

WWF Warzone Sports ■ 1-player ■ Acclaim Entertainment Men in Pants

action Although the graphics make this a bit of a looker, the animation is jerky and odd, and the game suffers from fingersnapping controls, which are too slow to be effective. Amuse yourself by considering the pliaht of all these poor greased men, though. **

Timewarp

ruary 1988 Compiled by | Mark Green

Soviet blocks, BT in court and Star "Paws". It all happened 11 years ago today.



Soviet strike: Tetris arr

veryone's suffered from it. Even "normal" people who generally steer clear of games, have placed their weary heads on a soft, welcoming pillow, closed their eyes, and watched as the space between eyelid and eyeball is filled with a sea of multi-coloured falling blocks. It's the first and most recognisable symptom of massive Tetris addiction, and it has been afflicting gamers of all creeds since the game's release 11 years ago.

C64 Version Great music and bright graphics make this very attractive stuff, though it's the kind of brilliantly simple idea that'll work well on almost any machine 7 IQ FACTOR GRAPHICS AUDIO FUN FACTOR ACE RATING 956

■ Tetris' near-perfect score from ACE.

The idea behind Tetris was so simple that rival developers were immediately hauled into their bosses' offices to explain why they hadn't thought of it first. After all, the game merely required that you manoeuvre and rotate a range of falling blocky shapes to create solid horizontal lines that would then disappear and prevent the ever-rising wall from

engulfing the screen. There were few rewards for success - only a higher score - as the game gradually and painfully increased its

speed until your reflexes packed up. Alexey Pajitnov, the Russian responsible for the idea behind the game and programmer of the original incarnation, used his brainy scientific nature to ensure that gamers were effectively hypnotised by Tetris. The theory was that the human brain could only hold seven items in short-term memory at one time. Alexey programmed his game using seven tetrads (shapes that are made by sticking four squares together). His theory - that this would make the game more reflexive and addictive

was proved right, as pirated copies of PC Tetris spread across the USSR. Workers stared for hours at the coloured falling bricks, causing productivity levels to fall and divorce levels to increase.

When Mirrorsoft brought Tetris to the UK in 1988, the game was already three years old and astonishingly – completely illegal. The game had been sold to Mirrorsoft by Robert Stein of the publisher Andromeda. Stein had been pursuing the rights from Pajitnov but hadn't yet finalised permission. When the sinister-sounding . Electronorgtechnica (Russia's ministry of computer trade) took control of Tetris's distribution, and told Stein that any deals were off, he spent several months frantically trying to get the rights to a game that he'd already sold to Robert Maxwell.

Fortunately, in May 1988 Stein succeeded, but by then Tetris was already the best-known and most widely-played puzzler since Rubik's Cube.

Accolades came thick and fast, with ACE magazine in particular giving Tetris 956 out of 1,000 and describing it as "a horribly gripping game you won't be able to get out of your head." A host of awards were flung in its direction, including four "Excellence In Software" gongs from the Software Publishers Association (SPA).

The crazy world of the Web reveals some bizarre attempts to get to the bottom of its appeal. Try Brian Kobashikawa's exhaustive site: (http://synergy.design.ucla.edu/gallery/kobashik /tetris/), which offers, among other things, an analysis of the sexual pleasures gained from a good game of Tetris. He also believes that the game "achieved its world-wide popularity due to it not being particularly bound to any culture or society - it transcends all barriers."

Also unearthed from deep within the bowels of the Internet is a formal research project on why Tetris games with just two types of tetrad are impossible to beat. Inevitably there's also a "Tao of Tetris" site. But the

biggest indicators of the game's success are the thousands of unofficial sequels and clones; the 50 million copies sold and the estimated \$1billion already made from the idea. That and the populations of entire cities

enduring another sleepless night, thanks to those endlessly falling

Games of the month The games that were causing smiles when Sonic was just a twinkle in his daddy's eye...



Bubble Bobble

Publisher: Firebird System: Atari ST

System: **Atari ST**This 16-bit translation of the brilliant bubble-busting arcade platformer was by far the best. platformer was by far the best Bub and Bob (the same little dinos still fulfilling their bubbly destiny in the *Bust-A-Move* games) were as cute as a button, and the gameplay was as finely tuned as you'd expect from platform-master Taito



Cosmic Causeway

Publisher: **Gremlin**System: **C64**Control a big bouncing ball travelling across monotonous, chequered landscapes, avoiding blocky caterpillars and dragons? blocky caterpiliars and oragonal but this sequel to the pseudo-3D sphere-roller *Trailblazer* was fast and responsive; a game that made you forego lunch and dinner to keep playing.



■ Tetris: a Russian game

sold illegally via Hungary to Robert Maxwell.

Firefly

Publisher: **Special FX**System: **Spectrum**In retrospect, this shoot'em-up – from the maker of
the excellent film-licensed the excellent Tilm-licensed Cobra – only had pretty visuals in its favour. The insect-inspired spacecraft was a pig to control. And travelling through sectors, shooting baddles and solving simplistic puzzles was quickly repetitive. Still, nice explosions



hen videogames really took off in the early '80s, the global mega-corporations were quick to get involved. British Telecom was no exception, quickly setting up Telecomsoft and its subsidiary software labels Firebird and Rainbird to absorb any spare money that people might have left after paying the phone bill. With the massive wallet of Telecom behind it. these labels were able to purchase and publish such classic titles as Elite, The Sentinel and Starglider.

Unfortunately, a big wallet is often synonymous with a big ego and a big attitude, and Telecomsoft was almost too eager to enter into a series of legal scrapes. Naturally, it often emerged from these spats grinning from ear to ear, thanks largely to having a more acute business sense than software houses consisting largely of lads who'd grown up hunched over computer keyboards in their bedrooms. One such dispute came to a head 11 years ago this month, and was partly responsible for bringing to an end the life of veteran publisher, Hewson Consultants.

Hewson had developed a reputation for highquality games since the primitive but perversely enjoyable Heathrow Air Traffic Controller was released for the ZX81 in 1981. Hewson coders such as Andrew Braybrook, Rafaelle Cecco and Dominic Robinson spent their days programming games

zippy scrolling shooter Uridium and the frog-based maze game Ranarama helped cement Hewson's popularity among 8-bit gamers.

At the time, 16-bit computers were vying for the attention of 8-bit programmers everywhere. A number of Hewson's most prolific writers branched out and formed development house Graftgold. They set to work on a host of 8-bit and 16-bit titles, including: Morpheus (by Braybrook for the Commodore 64) and Magnetron (by Steve Turner for the Spectrum).

Hewson believed it had first dibs on these two games, but Graftgold signed on for Telecomsoft. Hewson, whose reputation had suffered when the programmers left, was miffed, and summoned its solicitors. The court found in favour of BT and ordered Hewson to pay costs. Hewson watched bitterly from the sidelines as Graftgold entered a long-term contact with the Telecom boys.

Hewson later reformed as 21st Century Entertainment and concentrated on pinball videogames, before winding up its UK operations earlier in 1998. Telecomsoft didn't last much longer either, and was bought by MicroProse a year after the court case. This caused a slew of Graftgoldbased legal problems in itself – as anyone who waited a year for the team's Rainbow Islands conversion will tell you.

What of Graftgold? It produced games such as Fire & Ice for the PC and 16-bit computers but then past into mysterious "retirement". According to some ex-Hewson programmers it's still out there somewhere. According to other sources, the members are have all gone into "sad database coding". But their history lives on...

Gaming Round-up Also going on this month

- Software publisher Destiny announced an ingenious competition to tie in with its snowbased shoot-'em-up, Yeti. After placing a bet of £200 (at 150-1) on Chris Bonnington finding the abominable snowman, the company promised to give the winnings to anvone who accurately described the monster if found. If no-one got the description right? Destiny kept the money, of course. Sneaky...
- It was a great month for competitions. Hewson had already pulled off the least sensible move in gaming by publishing an abysmal traindriving simulation. Evening Star. The company's next step was to run a competition - in conjunction with Railway World magazine, no less - for anvone who thought they were the world champion Bristol-to-Bournemouth routenegotiator. You see now why Hewson went bust?
- Capcom, bestknown today for its original and diverse range of identical Street Fighter games, severed its relationship with publishing house Elite and snuggled up



■ The "Boy Line-acre" (as Mick Channon famously called him) proves that retro is in - even if you've forgotten Mr Channon.

with US Gold instead. The excellent platformer Ghouls 'n' Ghosts was just one of many fine games subsequently published via US Gold, until Capcom realised that Street Fighter alone would see the company right for the next ten years.

Despite extensive advertising, Matthew "Jet Set Willy" Smith's new game (breath in) Attack of the Mutant Zombie Flesh Eating Chickens From Mars Starring Zippo The Dog, was cancelled by Software Projects. The **Crazy Internet** Rumours Factory has it that the budget Spectrum/C64 game

Star Paws was AOTMZFECFMSZTD in disguise. The basis for these rumours? Both games starred a dog.

■ Mattel was

unceremoniously dumped as Nintendo's distributor in the UK. after a particularly poor performance. The Nintendo **Entertainment System** had died a Sega Saturn-style death in the UK, and no new games have been released since the machine's debut. This left the Sega Master System to steal all the glory. So, you can blame Mattel for that irritating Sonic creature - at least as far as UK sales go.

World News Headlines

■ MPs voted to let TV cameras into the

Away from the digital world

- Britain became the laughing stock of the world as it worshipped Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards, a bespectacled young chap with the ski-jumping skills of a cardboard box.
 The first Comic Relief Day saw millions of Britons risk his ned plastic.
- MIPs voted to let IV cameras into the House of Commons, meaning that fans of lovely housewife Mrs Margaret Hilda Thatcher finally got to see what she looked like close up. It wasn't nice at all.

 Esther Rantzen emerged victorious as "Woman of the Year", After this of Britons stick big, red, plastic conks on their faces and
- astonishing success, she went on to present her own afternoon chat show, which didn't earn her any awards. laugh along with the likes of Lenny Henry, all in the name of charity.

Music Charts

13th February 1988

1 I Think We're Alone Now

2 | Should Be So Lucky Kylie Minogue

3 When Will I Be Famous

4 Tell It To My Heart Taylor Dayne 5 Candle In The Wind (Live)

Elton John

■ Information from CIN

Film Charts

London, 12th February 1988

1 Robocop

2 Fatal Attraction

3 No Way Out

4 White Mischief 5 Crv Freedom

■ Information from Screen

Zzao 64 Readers' Charl

1	The Last Ninja	System 3
2	Bubble Bobble	Firebird
3	California Games	US Gold/Epyx
4	Wizball	Ocean
5	Barbarian	Palace

6 World Class Leaderboard US Gold/Access

7 Leaderboard US Gold/Access 8 World Games US Gold/Epyx 9 Kikstart II Mastertronic

10 Zynaps Hewson

Your Sinclair magazine pectrum top 10

1	OutRun	US Gold
2	Match Day II	Ocean
3	Combat School	Ocean
4	Gunship	MicroProse

5 Garfield - Big Fat Hairy Deal The Edge

6 California Games EDVX Gary Lineker's Superstar Soccer Gremlin

8 Star Wars Domark 9 Magnificent 7 Ocean

10 Football Director D&H

■ The Eagle? The tit more like.

Matchday II

Publisher: Imagine/Ocean System: Spectrum

As mentioned in Arcade 2's
"Where Are They Now?", Jon
Ritman and Bernie Drummond came up trumps with this sequel to the early '80s original Improved graphics and more intelligent computer foes meant that, until Sensi Soccer on the Amiga, this was "The Best Footy Game Ever".



Powerplay

Publisher: Arcan

System: Amiga/ST

This Trivial Pursuit-come-strategy game let you answer questions and beat up your opponent's team members. opponents team members, adding those extra slices of enjoyment and value that a computer board game needs. It looked nice too, tempting 8-bit owners buy one of those newfangled 16-bit things.



Test Drive

Publisher: Accolade System: Amiga/ST

■ The Test Drive series began with this graphically ground-breaking 3D racer. Realism was heightened by the addition of patrol cars that gave you speeding tickets unless you used your speeding tickets unless you used your speedtrap-detecting radar, or ran them ragged. The range of cars that all handled differently, was a first, too.

Great Gaming Moments

Femembered by Rich Pelley STATE Remembered by Rich Pelley Rich Pelley Rich Pelley STATE Remembered by Rich Pelley Rich Pelley

Experience getting away from it all in Konami's Metal Gear Solid.



S on pla

ometimes you visit a place – maybe a city or a natural wonder – that takes your breath away. That will be imprinted

on your mind forever. That you'll never want to visit again Just In Case It Isn't So Good Next Time. Or you'll eat a meal that sends your taste buds into a frenzy, that makes you wonder "What have I been eating all this time when I could have been eating this?" Or maybe you'll meet a person of the opposite sex that you'll instantly connect with; that you'll feel like you've known forever, whom you want to marry and be happy with For The Rest Of Your Life.

Similarly, sometimes – just sometimes – you'll reach a location in a videogame, pick up a power-up or interact with a character

and find yourself having to stop, take a mental step back and think "This is great, this is. What a fantastic idea. What an absolute stroke of bloody *genius*."

And so when you first discover that you can climb into the cardboard box in Metal Gear Solid, you won't you won't want to get out of it for hours. It's hilarious. You'll be accustomed to the sneaky nature of the game already: hiding in the shadows, clinging to walls, avoiding the track of security cameras and fitting a silencer to your gun to sneakily pick off the baddies from behind without alerting attention to yourself. But then you find the box and climb on in. You can move about! It's like a stupid Warner Brothers' Road Runner cartoon, where Wile E Coyote hides inside a box on roller skates with a magnet, trying to skulk up on an unsuspecting Road Runner who he's lured to a standstill with a plate full of birdseed laced with Acme iron pellets. If it can work for Wile (and, let's face it, maybe this time might just be the time it does), then surely it can work for you too?

And the box is also an invaluable tool. You can used it to sneak past enemies, provided you're not being entirely stupid, that is. A cardboard box that has come to life and is

Wanna play?

■ Konami's Metal Gear Solid is set for a UK release on 26 February. has been out on import for a couple of months, but it's so text-heavy that if you buy it, you'll miss out on the superb storyline and also find the game far too hard to play. There's a US version out too, but Konami has tried to slap a ban on US imports of this entering the UK, so copies can be thin on the ground. Still, it's not long to wait until the end of February

moseying along a walkway is still going to draw attention to itself, after all. But once you're in the box, you can hide it in the back of cargo trucks and get yourself a free lift to the destination on the side of the carton. (Wondered why the boxes were labelled? It's so that you can use them to save time backtracking through the levels.)

You can also cower under the cardboard to avoid the attack of the wolf dogs. Taking the opportunity to mark his territory, the wolf puppy will relieve himself over your board-protected head and (because you now smell of dogs) you will avoid any more hound hassle. When you've finished, you can get out of the box and, *Inspector Gadget*-style, stuff it into your pocket to carry around for as long as you want, pulling it out whenever the need calls. But just hiding in it is *still* fantastic. It's as good as the real thing. Provided, of course, your "thing" is hiding in cardboard boxes.

Once you discover you can climb in the box, you won't want to get out. It's hilarious.



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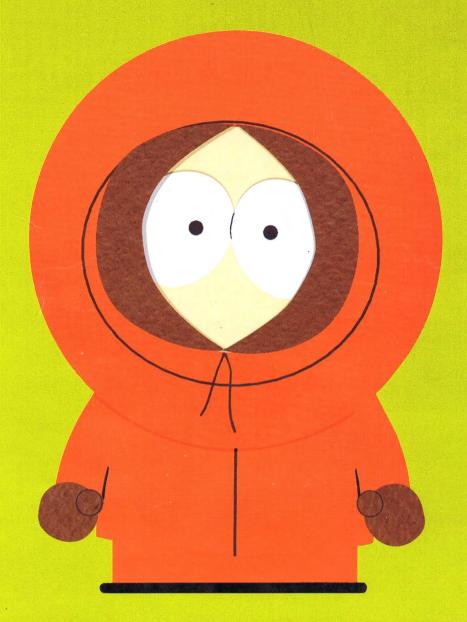
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